

The New Amberola
GRAPHIC



CONTEST!
(see p. 23)

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Deadline for
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May 15, 1998
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The New Amberola Graphic

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Editor's Notes

William Howard Taft was President the year she was born, and Thomas Edison was still selling wax cylinders. In the 1930s she appeared with Claude Rains, Shirley Temple, Randolph Scott, Alice Faye, and many others. But over fifty years ago she gave up her career in the movies because she was tired of being typecast as girl reporter, sales clerk, or "wise older sister."

Now, at the age of 87, she has received an Academy Award nomination as best supporting actress for her marvelous work in the recent film Titanic.

We salute Gloria Stuart for a remarkable comeback, and we'll be rooting for her to win that Oscar which she justly deserves!

- M.F.B.

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(worse!)

readers did not receive the last issue because they failed to notify us of a change in their address.

Don't let this happen to you! Let us know when you move (second class mail does not get forwarded automatically).

Edna Fischer (1902 - 1997) San Francisco's First Lady of Radio

Mayor Dianne Feinstein proclaimed Oct. 1, 1983 "Edna Fischer Day" in San Francisco to honor the City's First Lady of Radio. This proclamation was celebrated with a gala party at the Top of the Mark on Nob Hill. Here Miss Fischer is interviewed by San Francisco musician and pianist Peter Mintun for his popular "Music in the Air" broadcast originating from Nob Hill's Hotel Mark Hopkins.



Miss Fischer spent her earliest years in the East Bay. "I grew up in Berkeley; my family moved there a few weeks before the earthquake in 1906," she said, recalling that, as a tot, she played "Glow-Worm" for San Francisco refugees arriving in Berkeley aboard trains from the burning city. "I was considered a child prodigy--played piano around the neighborhood before I was old enough to go to school," Miss Fischer said.

Upon graduation from Berkeley High School she toured with the famed Duncan Sisters, Vivian and Rosetta, in their famous show, "Topsy and Eva." In her teens she performed at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition.

Edna Fischer's radio career began in 1918, at Berkeley's Claremont Hotel, where she participated in an experimental broadcast. "It was some sort of experimental station--I think it became KRE later on," she recalled.

"In 1926," she said, "I suffered a multiple fracture of my right wrist in a car crash, canceled some East Coast appearances, and while I was recuperating Fred Sherman (of San Francisco's Sherman, Clay & Co.) encouraged me to get into radio at KFRC."

KFRC-AM (610 kHz) then broadcast from

studios in the plush Don Lee Cadillac building at 1000 Van Ness Avenue. There, she became a regular on "Blue Monday Jamboree," one of the earliest and most popular local radio programs in the history of San Francisco radio, where she starred with Tommy Harris and Morey Amsterdam.



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She recorded "The Varsity Drag" and "Rag Doll" in Oakland, and both were released as Victor 21380 in 1928. (Initially this was a West Coast release, but it eventually wound up in the full Victor catalogue. -Ed.)

In the very early 1930s she was hired away from KFRC by KPO, the Chronicle-Hale Brothers' station broadcasting from Fifth and Market Streets in the building that now houses Marshall's Department Store.

The station was soon sold to NBC, and, in 1933, studios moved to the 21st floor of 111 Sutter Street. There, KGO and KPO (now KNBR) originated local programs as well as shows to NBC's Red and Blue networks. She appeared with major musical stars, including her close friend Meredith Willson, later author and composer of "The Music Man." He was NBC's musical director at San Francisco during the mid-1930s.

San Francisco Examiner columnist and noted jazz historian Philip Elwood recalled in 1983 that, as a child, his mother traveled to San Francisco in the mid-1930s, and "I would tag along and have her leave me at 111 Sutter... at the piano, usually, was Fischer, a short, dark-haired, intense young woman. At the time I was in awe of all radio personalities - I am still in awe of Edna Fischer. Her piano playing 45 years later remains superb, her memory sharp, her stories (tinged with warmth, frankness and humor) a joy to hear."

Edna Fischer was crowned "The First Lady of San Francisco Radio" during this golden era. She appeared on scores of major radio shows including Signal Oil's "Carefree Carnival" with Tommy Harris and Meredith Willson and wrote the "Carefree Carnival" theme. She also appeared on important Los Angeles radio broadcasts. "I'd go to L.A. quite often--used to drive down and back in an old Buick with my dog for company. I played all kinds of radio shows, worked with Paul Whiteman, among others, and helped in studio productions," Miss Fischer recalled.

In 1929 she composed "Someday Soon" with lyrics by the Duncan Sisters. Anson Weeks and His Orchestra recorded the hit song in San Francisco for Columbia Records on June 21, 1929. Miss Fischer and Weeks composed "Sorry" in 1930 with lyrics, again, by the Duncan Sisters.

By the late 1930s she was a household name in the City, and her broadcast "Stars in the Making" on NBC-KPO showcased San Francisco's latest musical talent discoveries. In 1939 Miss Fischer originated broadcasts from NBC's studios at the Treasure Island World's Fair and composed "There's Lots of Fun Over on Treasure Island" -- her theme song for the duration of the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition.

She was in the vanguard of San Francisco radio and night club stars who entertained troops at Ford Ord before the outbreak of World War II. After the war began, Miss Fischer appeared at war bond rallies and USO shows at Bay Area Army and Navy bases. She

also composed "My Great, Great Grandfather," a patriotic song waxed for Decca in 1942 by her close friend Bing Crosby. As part of the war effort, she appeared on three episodes of Carleton E. Morse's legendary prime-time NBC Red Network radio serial drama "One Man's Family," where she performed her patriotic song to an audience of millions.

She continued at NBC through the 1940s and remained a major radio star after KPO changed call letters to KNBC in the late 1940s.

With the ascent of television in the late 1940s and 50s, Miss Fischer became music director of KPIX-TV, then located at Hotel Mark Hopkins. There, she worked with such musical stars as Del Courtney.

In 1928 she married Milton C. Hayes, a purser for Oceanic Lines steamship company. He was later general manager of the Press Club of San Francisco, at 555 Post Street, and by the mid-50s she had effectively retired.

Milton Hayes passed away in 1981, and two years later Miss Fischer came out of retirement with a new edition of "Stars in the Making" on San Francisco's National Public Radio Station, KALW-FM. San Francisco radio listeners wrote

hundreds of fan letters to welcome Miss Fischer back to the air, as did Chronicle columnist Herb Caen, seen here at her Top of the Mark gala with Don Neely, leader of the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra and vocalist Carla Normand. Miss Fischer had just appeared on KCBS-AM with Neely's orchestra in Peacock Court, Hotel Mark Hopkins.



"Stars in the Making" proved so popular on KALW in the mid-1980s that Miss Fischer also broadcast a weekly fifteen-minute piano medley of her favorite songs on the NPR station.

In early 1997, Miss Fischer enjoyed a second retirement in her comfortable Cathedral Hill condominium and kept close, daily contact with hundreds of friends, who included Herb Caen, who, in early 1996 reminded his Chronicle readers of Miss Fischer's famous radio sign-off, "Stay Wonderful."

Edna Fischer died in her sleep on November 2, 1997.

The above was written by David Fowler, with recent photos by Rob Thomas, and was reprinted with permission. For more biographies of San Francisco personalities, visit the Museum of the City of San Francisco's website at WWW.SFMuseum.ORG. Also see Edna Fischer's obituary elsewhere in this issue.

Below, Miss Fischer is pictured in this NBC promotional photograph posing with her dog "Flippy," a gift from an admiring listener.



Above: Charles W. Hamp's version of "Heigh-Ho! Ev'rybody, Heigh-Ho!" is far superior to the insipid rendition by Rudy Vallee on Victor. This is due in no small part to the uncredited rollicking, thumping piano accompaniment by Edna Fischer, which contains a borderline boogie-woogie break. When asked about this in her 1983 interview with Peter Mintun, Miss Fischer replied, "You have to have both hands, you know...Most people think, 'Well, I play a good right hand, but I can't play with my left hand'...My dad taught me better than that. He said, 'If you can do it with your right hand, you can do it with your left hand.' So, I did!"

More Thoughts on Early Double-Sided Records

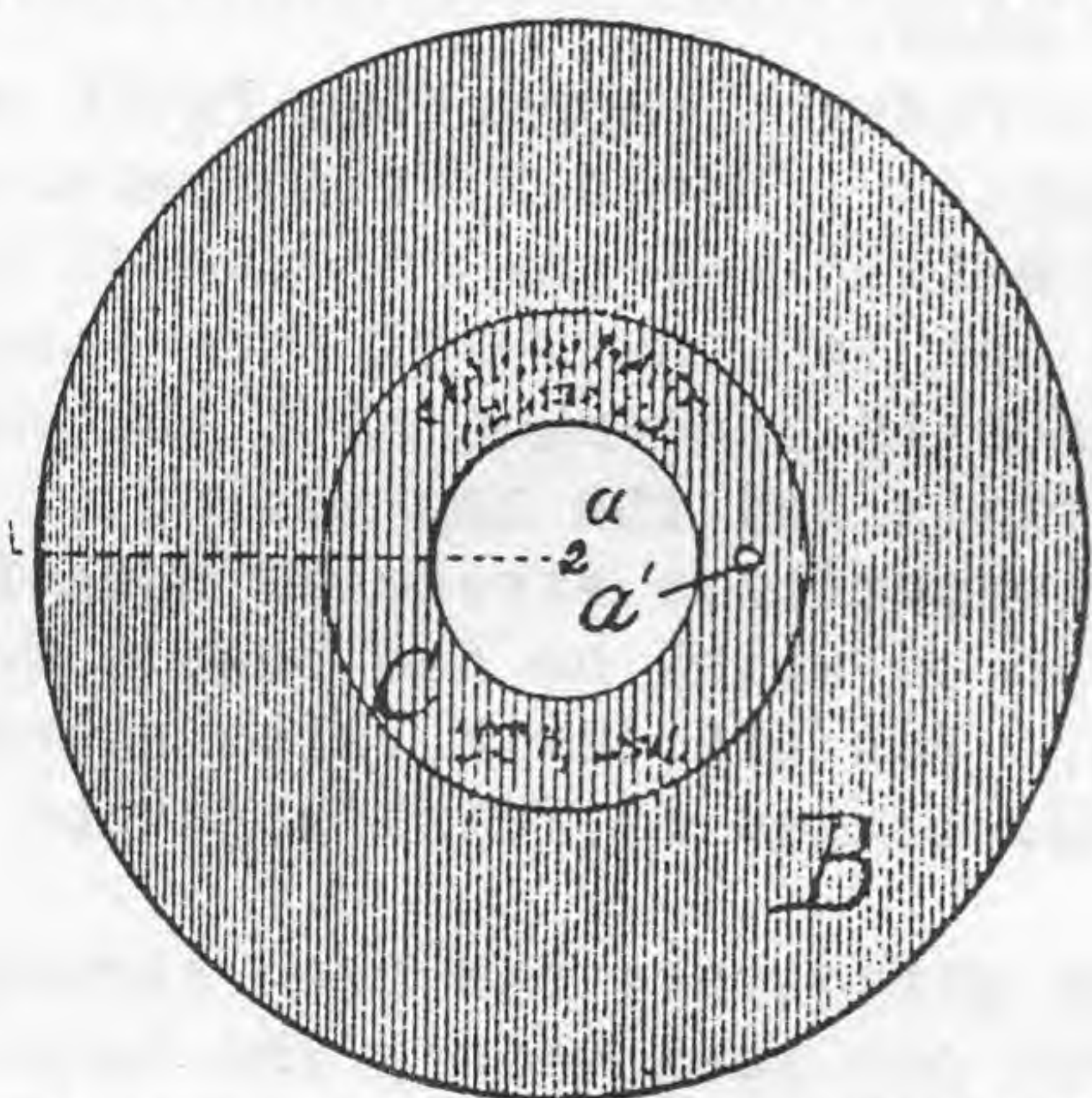
by Frank Andrews

With reference to your "Collector's Primer" and mention of double-sided recorded discs in The New Amberola Graphic no. 96, I would like to contribute the following:

In a patent dispute in Austria in 1905/6, which I will detail further on, a USA patent, 505,910 of 1893, was referred to as claiming double-sided recorded discs, and a mention of such discs in an article in "Invention" published earlier in 1889.

505,910. TABLET FOR RECORDING SOUND-VIBRATIONS. JOSEPH E. WASSENICH, Chicago, Ill. Filed June 29, 1891. Serial No. 397,860. (Model)

Claim.—1. A flexible disk for recording sound vibrations adapted for use on a flat tablet holder, composed of a disk of paper or other suitable flexible material, with a coating of a suitable flexible sound recording material thereon, substantially as described.



2. A flexible disk for recording sound vibrations, consisting of a thin flexible body of paper or other suitable flexible material, having on both sides a thin flexible coating surface of a suitable sound-recording material substantially as described.

3. A flexible disk for recording sound vibrations consisting of a thin flexible body of paper or other suitable flexible material having on both sides a thin coating of wax or a wax-like sound-recording material substantially as specified.

4. A phonogram disk of such an attenuated thinness as to lie loosely on a flat tablet holder and adapt itself firmly against the face of same at point where record is being made, substantially as described.

5. A flexible phonogram disk for use on a flat tablet holder and adapted to receive a sound record in the form of a spiral groove, substantially as described.

Abstract of Joseph Wassenich's 1893 Patent for flexible disc records. Note his reference to double-sided records in paragraph 2!

Did Adamor N. Petit know of this material when he applied for his patent in January 1901 for "Improvements in Double face records"? He must have done, otherwise, why for "Improvements"? He was living at Sidney Place, Newark, New Jersey. He presented two claims: 1) For producing a disc of homogeneous material throughout having a spiral sound recording of sinuous grooves on each of its faces (claiming single face discs were not so homogeneous); and 2) A disc having a sinuous groove impressed on each face, with the spiral groove on one face running in a direction opposite to the other face. Petit stated that to his knowledge and belief his discovery or invention was not known, used, described or patented, or in public use or on sale in the United States for more than two years prior to his application. He also stated that he had not applied for a patent in any foreign country.

His application was rejected by U.S. Patents office on January 23, 1901, which referred him to the Wassenich patent of October 3, 1893 and the defunct English patent of Edison 1644 of 1878.

Petit applied again on January 21, 1901, which was when "made of homogeneous material throughout" was inserted into his original claim, and he rubbished the Wassenich patent as being for built up paper discs, and as for the Edison patent, quoted a Southern District of New York Court's remarks saying it was "vague and without force."

To no avail, he received another rejection on February 9th, the U.S. office pointing out that the Southern District Court's remarks had been about Edison's gravity reproducer, and did not refer to a record.

Amending his specification slightly, Petit again applied on the same day, Feb. 9th, again pointing out that the flow of material in the presses with two sided matrices produced a better homogenous mass than when a single side recorded master was used, because of the discrepancy in the rate of flow, leading to "cold spots" on the surfaces of the single sided discs. He also claimed that locking nuts or pins in turntables, to secure single side recorded discs from slippage, were unnecessary with double sided discs, as the recorded grooved surfaces gave a better friction contact with the turntables' surfaces.

On March 2nd 1901 Ademor Napoleon Petit applied to the Austrian Empire's Patent Office in Vienna for a patent for his "invention," application no. 3389. His latest U.S. application was rejected as of March 15th. This was the month in which the International Zonophone Company was formed in New York, with Frederick M. Prescott having a leading role. He had been the exporter of Zonophone products for the Universal Talking Machine Company and the then failing National Gramo-

phone Corporation, he had visited Germany in March, and again in May, when the International Zonophone Company was re-incorporated, and commercial business began in Berlin, Prescott moving there with his family, aged 32.

Petit had celluloid cylinders to his name, which he sold to an English founded company called The International Phonograph and Indestructible Record Co., Ltd. in June 1902. Frederick M. Prescott was also on the board of directors with Petit.

By this time in the U.S., the National Gramophone Corporation had gone into liquidation, in September 1901, and the Zonophone Records were flourishing in Europe, with double-sided discs being made for Figner in Brazil, who took examples in May 1902 whilst in Paris, and had a shipment sent to Rio de Janeiro in June 1902. Applications had been mooted for double sided recorded disc patents in Germany, but, as none had been granted, this would explain the lack of any patents claims on the labels of the double-faced Zonophone Records sent to South America. Single faced Zonophones from Berlin had first been marketed in September 1901.

Petit had applied again for his patent with further argument on March 12, 1902 and the 14th. The rejection this time, on March 31st, ended with "The claims are finally rejected"!

Never say Die! It had been impossible, wrote Petit, to provide examples of discs to the examiners before the time for amendments to specifications expired, but it had been understood that when tests were completed, and anything of importance ensued, then applications would be re-opened. Thus Petit wrote on August 6th 1902, he having previously submitted discs at a personal interview with the examiner. His discs had been obtained from his colleague in the English cylinder company, F. M. Prescott in Berlin, and were Zonophone pressings. Holes were drilled in both double sided and single sided discs and colored plastic material filled in and put under compression. The single sided discs showed more distortion of the plastic matrix than did the double faced discs. This, Petit submitted, was proof and asked for his application to be allowed. A reply on September 18th informed Petit that his case was re-opened, but was still under rejection, but would receive further evidence of patentability which Petit could advance.

It took Petit some time to come up with more supporting evidence but, in the meantime, his Austrian Empire application in Vienna was granted on December 28, 1902, No. 22915.

It wasn't until June 1903 that Petit tried again at the U.S. Patent Office. He presented an affidavit of a Russian, Leo Czlenow,

sworn on May 29, 1903, before the American Consul-General in Berlin, he having been the final inspector for over a year for Zonophone Records manufactured in Berlin, and backed up by Petit's claims as to the advantages of pressing double face discs as against single face discs, many more of the latter having to be rejected than the former because of faults in the finished product.

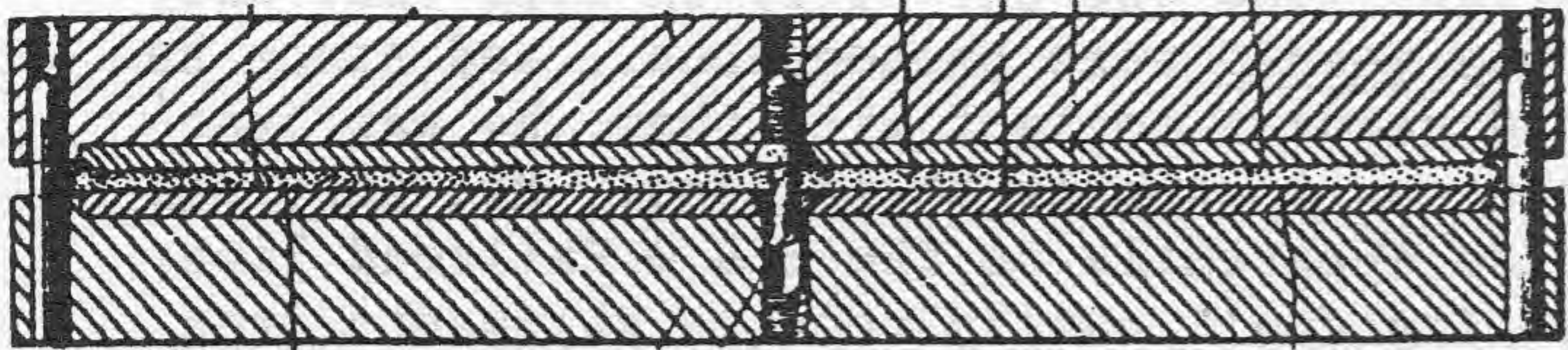
Max Goldstein, a German and the General Superintendent of Manufacture of the International Zonophone Company in Berlin, also swore to an affidavit on March 28th, but he also presented two American Zonophone single face discs #9663 & 9664, being parts 1 and 2 of "My Little Sign is Gone from o'er the Door," two British recorded Zonophones in 633 & 634, being parts 1 and 2 of the celebrated British comedian Dan Leno's title of "The Huntsman," but recorded by Fred Wilson, and two French recorded Zonophones in 12103 & 12104, La Garde Republicaine playing parts 1 & 2 of "Les Lanciers." The discs demonstrated the different characteristics of single sided recordings within the context of single titles recorded in parts, a characteristic absent from the simultaneous pressings in a double face disc.

A third affidavit supporting Petit was from the American, Edwin Martin Kearsing, residing in Berlin and the Foreman of Manufacture for the International Zonophone Company, directly concerned with the mixing of the materials and the impressing of the discs. His experience stretched back five years, in two of which he had been a foreman of pressmen. His affidavit, also sworn on May 28, 1902, backed up Petit's patent claims.

All three affidavits had been signed just a little over one week before The International Zonophone Company of Berlin & New York was acquired by The Gramophone & Typewriter, Ltd. of London, on June 6, 1903.

But Petit's application of June 19, 1903, in spite of the examples and the affidavits, was rejected. On October 28 he renewed his application, having reworded it and making four claims, substantially on the arguments of his previous applications. On December 17, 1903 Petit was informed that his U.S. patent had been allowed. With the appropriate fees paid, Petit assigned half of the patent to Frederick M. Prescott who, in Weissensee, Berlin, had already set up the International Talking Machine Co. m.b. H., and was about to launch the Odeon Records on the market, in February 1904, their labels carrying the patents legend of various countries, including that of the United States, no. 749,092 of January 4th 1904.

749,092. DOUBLE-FACED SOUND-RECORD. **ADEMOR N. PETIT**
Newark, N. J., assignor of one-half to **F. M. Prescott**, New York, N. Y.
Filed Jan. 7, 1901. Serial No. 42,337. (No model.)



Claim.—1. As a new article of manufacture, a sound-record consisting of a disk of hardened plastic material presenting oppositely-facing, phonetically-uniform sound-records impressed into the plastic material and fixed or set therein by the initial setting of the disk.

2. As a new article of manufacture, a disk of homogeneous, hardened, plastic and dense material having a sound-record on both of its opposite faces formed by compressing a body of such material in a plastic condition between opposite templets each of which is roughened by a sound-record.

3. As a new article of manufacture, a sound-record consisting of a disk presenting oppositely-facing sound-records impressed therein.

4. The process of making double-faced sound-record disks of uniform phonetic quality on both sides and from center to periphery on each side which consists in compressing a plastic homogeneous mass between two templets each of which is roughened as by having a sound-record formed in relief thereon and thereby causing the radial flow of material in assuming its final shape to be alike at both faces.

Abstract of Ademor N. Petit's 1904
U.S. Patent #749,092.

When Columbia issued its double sided discs in 1904, I believe it had representations from Prescott; otherwise, why did they not pursue double face discs?

In Vienna on May 15, 1905, the Austrian Patent Office received a complaint from the newly founded Schallplattenfabrik "Favorite" G.m.b.H. (makers of Favorite Records) of Germany, against the Petit patents for double face recorded discs, asking that it should be declared null and void. Both parties went into conference on January 4, 1906. (In England, the Nicole Records had taken on a double side recorded format with its November 1905 issues.) The January conference upheld the complaint by Favorite Records, and the patent was declared null and void, Petit having to pay 746 crowns, 34 hellers. Anticipation by the German patent of 1900, and with the homogeneous mass advantage unproven, were reasons for annulment. Petit appealed on May 30, 1906. It was rejected, and he had to pay another 600 crowns as the cost of the appeal. By this time, Nicole Records had passed to others, and Beka Records had come to England in December, 1905 as either double or single face recorded discs. Other European labels quickly followed in the double format. The patent was upheld by the Brazilian Courts, and the German Homophone Company, G.m.b.H. found it had to pay Prescott's International

Talking Machine Co. (Odeon Records) a license fee or royalties to sell its double-sided discs in Brazil.

What effect the Vienna decision had on the patents taken out in other countries, which I presume were in Petit's and Prescott's names or had been transferred to the ownership of the International Talking Machine Co., I have no idea. The British issued Odeon Records claimed patents in the USA, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Italy and Turkey, but I have seen no labels with Austria printed. Neither with France printed, where Pathe were the leaders in the market, still only with cylinders into 1906.

The market evidence is that all patents for double-side recorded discs must have been defunct or had become annulled between 1906 and 1908.



The patent reference on the right side of American records refers to the Petit double-sided patent. Only double-sided issues appear to carry this notice.



Two European double-sided discs with references to Petit's U.S. patent.

One of Edison's 13,000

by Martin F. Bryan

It is truly rare when we can document the business dealings of an early dealer, especially when more than eighty-five years have passed since that dealer entered and left the business!

In 1910, Edison's trade magazine featured a column entitled "The Other 13,000." It told of the various comings and goings of their dealers around the country. This article will detail the business activity of what must surely have been one of Edison's and Victor's smallest franchisees.

A few years ago I was fortunate in obtaining a number of business documents of what was known as the "Mt. Airy Phonograph Company." Remember Charlie Weaver's fictitious town of Mt. Idy some years back? When I finished putting all of the documents in order, I realized I was dealing with a town and a business no larger than what the late Cliff Arquette might have worked into one of his Charlie Weaver's "Letters from Mama"!

Mount Airy, Maryland, was once a sleepy little village a little more than twenty miles north of Washington, D.C., and almost as far west of Baltimore. Its neighbors (Buckeystown, Claggettsville, Woodville) suggest rural agricultural communities which may have had markets for farm products in the cities not too far away. A very helpful letter from Greg Becker, the Carroll County Branch Librarian in Mount Airy, indicates there was a population of only about 200 individuals in and around the town in the early 1900s. To quote Greg, "There were devastating fires in 1903 and again in 1914. Water hookups did not come until the 20's and sewer connections not until the 70's, so the town did not grow much until then."

The documents I acquired run from April, 1910 through early 1912 -- just short of two years. However, Librarian Becker stated he could find no record of the Mt. Airy Phonograph Co., and local historians had no knowledge of it either. "Could it be another Mt. Airy?" he wondered.

The answer is "no." From what is probably the last document I have (illustrated later), it seems the phonograph business was run by one Ira D. Watkins who, together with father Thomas and brothers Raymond and Asa, operated Thos. E. Watkins & Sons, "Dealers in and Shippers of Hay, Straw, Tan Bark, &C."

This being an agricultural community, and Ira Watkins being involved with customers who were principally farmers, he probably got the bright idea one day early in 1910 that what they needed were phonographs...and since he had regular contact with them, he was just the man to supply their need! Mt. Airy was also apparently on the B & O Railroad line, so Ira could easily receive shipments from the leading Baltimore jobber in Victor and Edison goods, E. F. Droop & Sons.

The following is based on some 69 invoices and 13 monthly statements from Droop, 17 checks written by Watkins, and a handful of miscellaneous materials, all between 1910 and early 1912. Imagine these documents being saved all these years!! (The checks run only through February, 1911, but he wrote just 20 in that period, and I have 17!) Most of the machines were invoiced by serial number, and it would be fascinating to learn if any of them survive in readers' collections in the Baltimore-Washington vicinity. The prices shown below are wholesale, unless indicated otherwise. The jobber allowed a 2% discount for prompt payment, and Watkins was usually able to take advantage of it.

Ira's first month in business must have been April, 1910, judging by the size and round numbers of his first record order. There were three Victor talking machines, 100 Victor records, four Edison phonographs, 150 Edison records, and miscellaneous items as follows:

April, 1910

1 Victor O #7386	\$10.50
1 Victor I #5532	15.00
1 Victor III & 3D Oak Horn	27.60
10 M Victor Needles	3.50
34 10" Vic. S.F. Records (@ 40c)	13.40
66 10" Vic. D.F. Records (@ 50c)	33.00
1 Ed. Gem D short #334348	10.50
1 Ed. Fireside short #25179	13.20
1 Ed. Standard Cyg. #712551	21.00
1 Ed. Standard Cyg. #707482D	21.00
50 Ed. Amberol Records (29c)	14.50
100 Ed. Standard Records (20.3c)	20.30
1 #2 Chip Brush	.08

There are no other documents for April, but the above is probably complete. The invoices do not show the individual wholesale record prices, but I figured them in so they could be compared with what we know were the retail prices. I find it curious that his initial order for Victor records contained fully 1/3 single-sided 10" records. There were no Red Seals. No serial number was shown for the Victor III, and I am a bit puzzled by the horn designation; perhaps the "3D" indicated a horn for the Victor III.

.....

THOMAS A. EDISON, Incorporated
ORANGE, N. J.

EDISON PHONOGRAPHS AND RECORDS



PHONOGRAPH SALES DEPARTMENT BULLETIN NO. 68

Oct. 25, 1911.

TRADE INFORMATION FOR DEALERS.

Correspondence concerning this bulletin should mention its number and be addressed to THOMAS A. EDISON, INCORPORATED, Phonograph Sales Department, Orange, N. J.

To simplify the handling of our machine outfits and as a means of eliminating some of the combinations which have been possible in the past, and to reduce to a great extent the assortment of stock our Dealers are compelled to carry, we have decided to standardize the types as indicated below.

Music Master Wooden Horns, at additional price, are an option on all type machines where not included as part of the regular equipment.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW OUTFITS.

GEM, combination type, with straight horn and model "K" reproducer, list - - - - - \$15.00

FIRESIDE, combination type, with straight horn and model "K" reproducer, list - - - - - \$22.00

FIRESIDE, combination type, with black metal Cygnet horn and model "K" reproducer, list- - - - - \$27.00

STANDARD, four minute type only, with straight blue flowered horn and model "N" (four minute) reproducer, list - - - - - \$30.00
(This you will observe is not of combination type. It will play only AMBEROL RECORDS. This machine, equipped with blue flowered horn, is intended primarily to meet the demands which have been created by mail order houses and to place Dealers in position to furnish similar outfits.)

STANDARD, combination type with black metal Cygnet horn and model "S" reproducer, list - - - - - \$35.00
(The model "S" reproducer is of combination type and is practically the same as the model "R" with the exception that the weight is fitted with a two and four minute sapphire arm mounted on swivel plate similar to model "K.")

This is typical of regular communications to the dealers from Edison. This is the first of three pages found still folded in its original envelope!

10.

May brought several small orders, two more Edison phonographs, but a return of the Gem and over half of the single-sided Victor records:

May, 1910

13 10" Vic. D.F. Records (@ 50c)	6.50
2 12" Vic. D.F. Records (@ 83.5c)	1.67
7 12" Vic. S.F. Records (@ 66.7c)	4.67
6 Vic. Needle arm set screws (3c)	.18
1 #22 Victor Horn	3.00
1 Ed. Standard Cyg. #707857	21.00
1 Ed. Fireside Cyg. #58637	16.20
6 #2 Chip Brushes (@ 7.5c)	.45
6 Edison Blanks (@ 14c)	.84
4 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	.82
1 Ed. Standard Records (@ 21c)	.21
15 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	3.05
6 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	1.74
2 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	.58
22 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	6.38
1 Ed. Recorder (1.80)	1.80

returned for credit:

21 10" Vic. S.F. Records (@ 40c)	8.40
1 Gem D #334348 (April order)	10.50
5 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	1.02
11 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	3.19

This month may be complete. The Victor records ordered might represent one each from the new monthly supplement, but still no Red Seal records were required. Why would a dealer who had stocked only three Victor talking machines order six "Needle arm set screws"?

June, 1910

1 Ed. Home Cyg. #327705	19.20
1 Ed. Standard D Cyg. #711842	21.00
1 Ed. Standard D Cyg. #706832	21.00
3 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	.61
11 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	2.23
2 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	.41
7 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	1.42
3 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	.87
3 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	.87
16 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	4.64
8 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	2.32
10 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	2.90
12 Ed. Blanks (@ 14c)	1.68
1 Ed. Standard Belt	.08

This month is complete. No Victor products stocked. Clearly, the Edison cylinder line is more popular with Watkins' customers!

July, 1910

1 Ed. Standard D Cyg. #713156	21.00
6 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	1.22
15 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	3.05
6 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	1.74
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	5.80
12 Place (?) Brushes (@ 7.5c)	.90

This month is complete. Summer interest in the phonograph did wane, but especially so In Mt. Airy!

August, 1910

15 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	3.05
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	5.80

This month is complete. All he has ordered is one copy each of the September supplement, excluding the five Grand Opera records.

September, 1910

10 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	2.03
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	5.80

returned for credit:

6 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	1.74
6 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	1.22

This month is complete. Edison did not allow such a high percentage of returns, but the jobber was apparently willing to consider the advance order of one record each as samples, and unsold samples could evidently be returned.

October, 1910

6 Vic. Needle Arm Screws (@ 3c)	.18
1 Ed. Standard Record	.21
1 Ed. Standard Record	.21
10 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	2.03
4 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	1.16
1 Ed. Amberol Record	.29
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	<u>5.80</u>

returned for credit:

merchandise totalling \$3.63, but I don't have slip (Probably 9 Amberols @ 29c + 5 Standard @ 20.3c)

This month is complete. Six more Victor "needle arm screws"???

November, 1910

1 12" Vic. Record	.67	1.00
1 Vic. Needle Set Screw	.03	.05
20 Edison Blanks (@ 14c)	1.68	.20
1 Ed. Horn Connector	.03	.05
1 Edison Recording Horn	1.20	2.00
10 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3)	2.03	
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ .29c)	<u>5.80</u>	

returned for credit

6 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	1.22
12 Ed. Amberol Records (@ .29c)	3.48

This month is complete. It is the first time some wholesale and retail prices are shown on invoices.

The total charges for Nov. 1910 (above) were \$11.44; against this were return credits totaling \$4.70. On the next page we show the monthly invoice...plus the check written to pay the bill! (Droop was still using a billhead printed with the date 190__.)

231 N. HOWARD ST.

C. & P. PHONE

231 N. HOWARD STREET - - BALTIMORE, MD.

VICTOR TALKING MACHINES

RECORDS, CABINETS AND SUPPLIES

INVOICE

Mt. Airy Phonograph Co.

1 Victor O #10648	10.50	
1 Victor I #12836	15.00	
50 Envelopes (@ 1/2c)	.25	
5 M Victor Needles (@ 35c/M)	1.75	
1 10" Vic. D.F. Record	.50	.75
2 10" Vic. D.F. Records (@ 50c)	1.00	.75
1 Ed. Standard Cyg. #717775	21.00	
1 Ed. Standard Straight #754447	18.00	
6 Chip Brushes (@ 7.5c)	.45	

12.

1 Ed. Standard Spring	.38	.75
4 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	.81	
22 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.3c)	4.47	
10 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.6c)	2.60	
(slight increase)		
4 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	1.16	
9 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29c)	2.61	
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29.4c)	5.88	
(slight increase)		
1 Ed. Amberol Record	.30	
13 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29.4c)	3.83	
Repairs	.75	
*(??	16.04?)	

returned for credit

1 Ed. Standard Mainspring	.38
5 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.6c)	1.03
7 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29.4c)	2.06

*This month not quite complete, and I don't have the monthly statement from Droop to reconstruct it with certainty.

February, 1911

1 12" Vic. S.F. Record	.67	1.00
4 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.6c)	.82	
10 Ed. Standard Records (@ 20.6c)	2.06	
6 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29.4c)	1.76	
20 Ed. Amberol Records (@ 29.4c)	5.88	

returned for credit

7 Ed. Standard Records	1.44
11 Ed. Amberol Records	3.23

This month is complete.

March, 1911

1 10" Vic. S.F. Record	.40	.60
3 10" Vic. D.F. Records (@ 50c)	1.50	
5 M Victor Needles (@ 35c)	1.75	
1 Ed. Triumph Cyg. #78829	45.00	75.00
1 Ed. Home D Cyg. #368574	27.00	
1 Ed. Standard Cyg. #766059	21.00	
1 Ed. Standard Record	.21	
5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03	
13 Ed. Amberol Records	3.82	
25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35	
13 Ed. Amberol Records	3.82	

returned for credit

oak wood cyg. for metal cyg.	6.00
3 Ed. Standard Records	.62
9 Ed. Amberol Records	2.65

This month is complete. Edison phonograph sales are still strong among Watkins' customer...but where, oh where are all of those cygnet horn machines today?

April, 1911

1 10" Vic. S.F. Record	.40	.60
1 Ed. Fireside D Cyg. #66297	16.20	
1 Ed. Standard D Cyg. #757223	21.00	
1 Ed. Triumph D Cyg. #	39.00	
(5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03)	
3 Ed. Amberol Records	.88	
10 Ed. Amberol Records	2.94	
(25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35)	

returned for credit

2 Ed. Standard Records	.41
10 Ed. Amberol Records	2.94
6 Ed. Standard Records*	1.26
6 Ed. Amberol Records*	1.80

* On a/c 10% Exchange

() Reconstructed (May supplement, 1 ea.)

This month is complete.

May, 1911

1 Vic. I _ M Spring	.39	
1 Rubber Foot	.03	
1 Governor spring & postage	.04**	
*1 Victrola 10th #1943	45.00	75.00
*5 Vic. 10" S.F. Records (@ .40)	2.00	.60
*3 Vic. 10" D.F. Records (@ .50)	1.50	.75
*3 Vic. 12" S.F. Records (@ .66 2/3)	2.00	1.00
*3 Vic. 12" D.F. Records (@ .83 1/3)	2.50	1.25
*1 Vic. 10" Red Seal " (@ .60)	.60	1.00
*2 Vic. 10" Red Seal " (@ 1.20)	2.40	2.00
*1 Vic. 10" Red Seal " (@ 1.80)	1.80	3.00
*2 Vic. 12" Red Seal " (@ .90)	1.80	1.50
*1 Vic. 12" Red Seal " (@ 1.80)	1.80	3.00
*2 Vic. 12" Purple Label (@ .75)	1.50	1.25
5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03	
25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35	

*Shipped directly from Droop to Watkins' customer Mr. F. Day of what looks like "Granstown" Md.

**The governor spring was shipped from Droop to a Rev. H. O. Keene.

returned for credit

4 Ed. Standard Records	.82
12 Ed. Amberol Records	3.53

Only \$8.80 worth of mdse. went directly to Watkins; the Day order is what we call "drop shipping" today. This month is complete.

June, 1911

4 Ed. Standard Records	.88
3 Ed. Amberol Records	.82
12 Ed. Amberol Records	3.53

This month is complete. Summer doledrums are setting in.

Regarding the attachment for Amberola records will state the factory has put a new proposition before the dealers viz; Rem attachment \$5.00 each. Standard, \$6.00 and some \$8.50. Each attachment has 10 Amberola records included.

We have envelopes to hold Victor records, made of heavy cardboard, which will cost you \$0.01 apiece.

Hoping to see you in the near future, as a verbal explanation of your questions will be more satisfactory than writing, with kindest regards, and with best wishes, we are.

Most respectfully,
E. F. Droop

Left: The jobber included this hand-typed note with the November 1, 1911 monthly statement. It outlines the new Edison attachment outfits as well as disc record sleeves. E. F. Droop was the sole Edison jobber for Maryland, and it is hard to imagine his office hand typing these little notes for every dealer in his territory!

Lower left: A handful of unfolded, undistributed monthly supplements suggests January, 1912 was Ira Wilkins' final month in business.

Below: Victor and Edison trade catalogues are virtually like new. It is unlikely that Ira made an effort to offer more than the current popular releases.

845 Pledge Aim—No. 3 (Gilbert and Sullivan) Edison Light Opera Co.
846 The Oceans Roll (Lucien Denny) Billy Murray
847 The Siren—Waltzes (Leo Fall) American Standard Orchestra
848 O Loving Heart, Trust On (Luisa Morena Gottschalk) Reed Miller
849 Calm as the Night (Gode) Elizabeth Spencer and James F. Harrison
850 You're the Queen in the Kingdom of my Heart Roland Hogue
851 Inverness March (Alex. F. Litigou) New York Military Band
852 Knock Wood (Harry Von Tilzer) Sophie Tucker
853 If the Waters Could Speak as They Flow (C. Graham) Mixed Chorus
854 Sweet Lullaby (Friedrich Menzel) H. T. Vanden Instrumental Trio
855 I'd Love to Lead a Military Band (Morse) Ada Jones and Chorus
856 The Roary (Nevin) Elizabeth Spencer and Knickerbocker Quartet
857 In the Shadows (Herman Finck) American Standard Orchestra
858 Open the Gates of the Temple (Joseph F. Knapp) R. Festyn Davies
859 When You're in Town (Irving Berlin) Ada Jones and Billy Murray
860 Will the Roses Bloom in Heaven? (Chas. K. Harris) Ethel Hephburn
861 Charm of Amour—Valse Lento (Kendall) (Bells) Charlie Dab
862 Annie Laurie (Ledy John Scott) Marie Nuelle
863 Winner (Albert Gumbel) Billy Murray and Chorus
864 If I Were King Overture (A. C. Adam) Edison Concert Band

Standard

35 cents each in United States; 40 cents each in Canada
10516 Unter Kaserhaus March (J. F. Wagner) United States Marine Band
10517 "Wanted! A Harp Like the Angels Play" (Helf) Will Oakland
10518 I Want Everyone to Love Me (Arthur E. Behm) Anna Chandler
10519 Down in Sunshine Valley (George Christle) Manuel Rosain
10520 In Vienna—Scenades (Grunfeld) Vienna Instrumental Quartet
10521 La Guapa—Spanish Dance (J. Baitan) New York Military Band
10522 Alexander's Ragtime Band (Irving Berlin) Billy Murray
10523 When I'm Alone I'm Lonesome (Irving Berlin) Anna Chandler
10524 In the Land of Harmony (Ed Snyder) Premier Quartet
10525 The New Tipperary March (Fulton and Helf) K. K. K.
10526 With a Song in My Heart (Ullrich) Military Band
10527 Will It Be the Same Thing Over Again (Chas. K. Harris) Ethel Hephburn
10528 You'll Do the Same Thing Over Again (Gumbel) Billy Murray
10529 Good Morning, Judge (Bertie Adler) Sophie Tucker
10530 Washington Waddle (Theodore Morse) Premier Quartet

THOMAS A. EDISON, INC., ORANGE, N. J., U. S. A.
Form 2105

Edison Records for January 1912



TRADE CATALOGUE of EDISON RECORDS

SECTION TWO

Numerical List of Victor Records

May, 1911



This catalogue contains a numerical arrangement of the following Victor Records:

ALL VOCAL RECORDS in Bohemian, Danish, Finnish, French, French-Canadian, German, Hawaiian, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Norwegian, Polish, Swedish, Spanish and Portuguese.

SPECIAL INSTRUMENTAL RECORDS made by the Bosca, La Scala, Vatican and Italian Orchestras, and Bohemian and Garde Republican Bands.

(For Chinese, Japanese and Korean Records—See Special Catalogue)

SEP

February - June, 1911
(5 Months)

Machines Ordered: 7	Returned: 0	Net: 7
Vic. Records Ordered: 6 + 23	Returned: 0	Net: 29
Std. Records Ordered: 34	Returned: 15	Net: 19
Amberol " " 155	Returned: 37	Net: 118

(Whereas the sales of 2-Minute records and Amberol records were almost on a par for 1910, we can see that within six months the sale of 2-Minute Standard records had diminished substantially (almost half of those ordered were returned unsold).

July, 1911

5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03
25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35
1 Gov. Spring & postage	.03

This month is complete
.....

August, and September, 1911

I have no documents for this period.
.....

October, 1911

5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03
25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35

This month is complete.
.....

November, 1911

(5 Ed. Standard Records	1.03)
(25 Ed. Amberol Records	7.35)
(?	1.80)

returned for credit

1 Ed. Standard Record	.21
11 Ed. Amberol Records	3.23

This month is complete.
.....

December, 1911

no documents
.....

January, 1912

?	.10
?	12.77
? (Ed. Triumph?)	39.00

This month is complete.
.....

The invoices and monthly statements end here. I can reconstruct only four of these last seven months in business, so another period summary is pointless.

It is important to mention that the papers contained order blanks for December 1911 and January 1912 records, both never filled in. There were also three "mint and unfolded" record supplements for January 1912. We can conclude almost certainly that Ira Watkins' business wound down at the beginning of 1912.

There was, however, a bonus in the package. An undated hand-written scrap of paper contained the following:

Optional
\$250.00.....cash
\$235.00 and Ruby bill

Each instance 20% profit
allowed to Phonograph Co.
on all record's (sic) or
machines that I buy for my
own personal use.

Saw Ruby and had a talk with
him. My preference is the
Cash Sale. Will take the
bill as mentioned above.

Ira D Watkins

Evidently Ira found buyers for his franchises, and the deal was either to be for cash, or cash and a bill for the difference which would be payable to him. He obviously preferred all cash in his note.


This was followed by an agreement between Watkins and three new owners of his Mt. Airy Phonograph Co., a copy of which is reproduced on the next page. The date is almost surely wrong, for Ira's name appears on all statements through January, 1912. Assuming that the sale did go through (and that this is just a blank copy of the agreement), the final sale of the business was in March of 1912. (I presume the three new owners "performed" their "individual parts faithfully!")

Perhaps by this time Ira was a hopeless phonograph addict, and he cleverly built a 20% personal discount on all of his purchases into the sales agreement---a practice which both Victor and Edison strictly forbade in their dealership licenses!

CABLE ADDRESS "DROOPSONS"

E. F. Droop & Sons Co.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DISTRIBUTORS OF



RECORDS, CABINETS AND GENERAL SUPPLIES.

MAIN OFFICE,
THIRTEENTH & D STS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

231 N. HOWARD ST.

Baltimore, Md. June 23, 1910

Droop's elaborate
1910 letterhead

THOS. E. WATKINS

IRA D. WATKINS

RAYMOND WATKINS

ASA H. WATKINS

THOS. E. WATKINS & SONS

DEALERS IN AND SHIPPERS OF

HAY, STRAW, TAN BARK, &C.

MT. AIRY, MD. _____ 191

AGREEMENT

I agree to forfeit all rights and privileges as agent for the sale of "THE VICTOR TALKING MACHINE" and "THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH" "VICTOR SUPPLIES and RECORDS" "EDISON SUPPLIES and RECORDS" as per contract signed and executed by the "VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO." and the "NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH CO." now known as the "EDISON PHONOGRAPH CO.," conferring all said rights and privileges to "THE MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." for such considerations as mentioned in this agreement.

(1) The "MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." to pay to IRA D. WATKINS the sum of \$247.50

(2) The "MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." to pay all liabilities now standing against IRA D. WATKINS, incurred in purchasing any stock for the "MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO.", whether in stock, sold or in transit, said purchases being made in name of IRA D. WATKINS

(3) The "MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." agrees to allow a discount of 20 per cent on all cash purchases made by IRA D. WATKINS, from them, provided such purchases are for his personal use.

(4) That IRA D. WATKINS agrees to forfeit all interest in all assets of "THE MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." including "STOCK" "NOTES", "CASH IN BANK" or otherwise, excepting amount due "THE MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." from CALVIN and ELMER RUBY. It being mutually agreed that H.G. HOOD, A. E. PHEBUS, and IRA D. WATKINS shall share equally any monie's collected from above parties, by IRA D. WATKINS.

(4) The "MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO." is composed by three (3) H. G. HOOD, A. E. PHEBUS, D. EDGAR SMITH.

We the undersigned do agree to the above agreement and will each subscribe and perform our individual parts faithfully.

 J. D. W.

MT. AIRY PHONOGRAPH CO.

Pres.

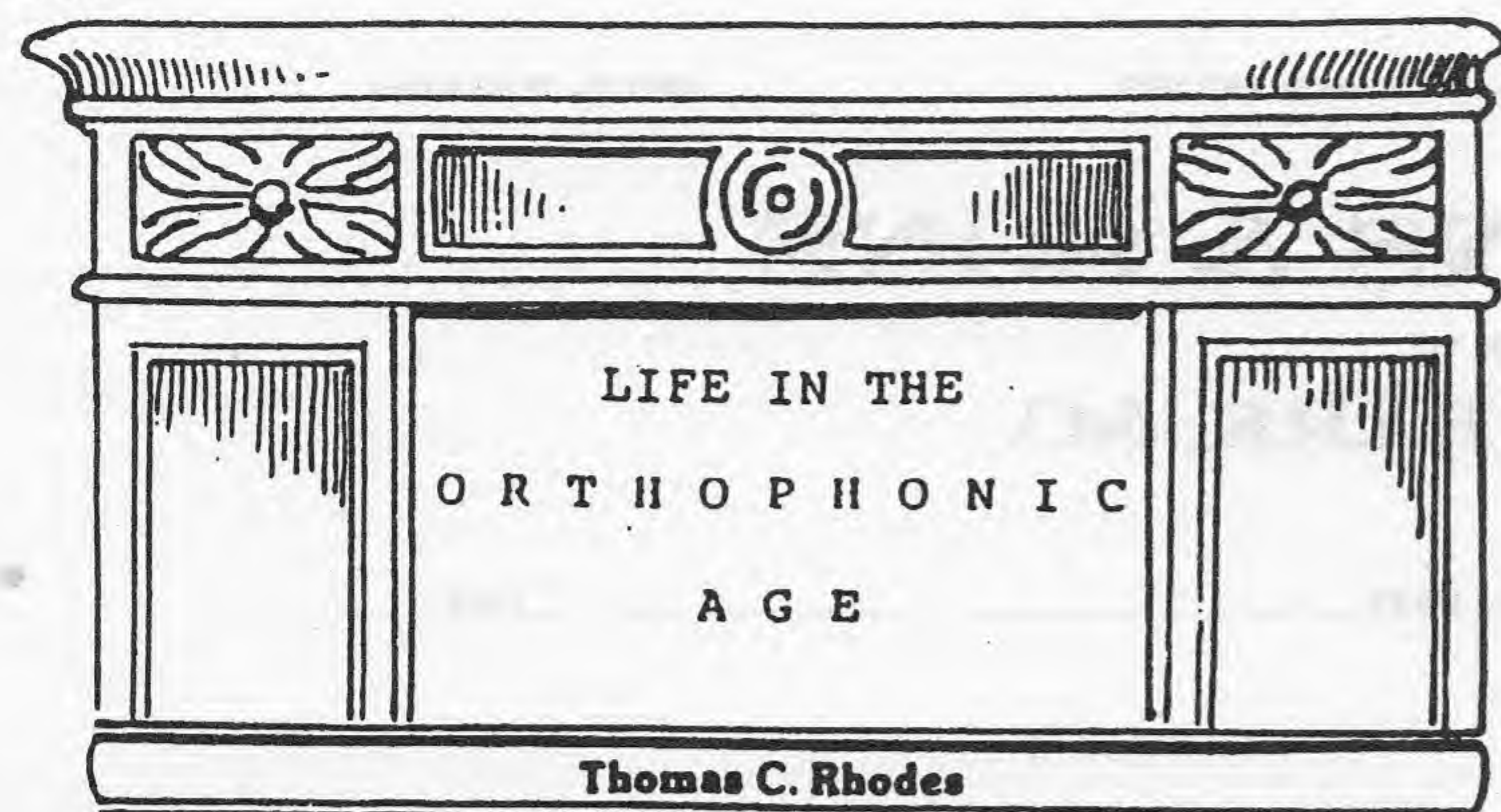
SECY.

TREAS.

WITNESS.

Date.
 March 22. 1911.

Presumably, this is the agreement which officially put Ira Watkins out of the record & phonograph business. I feel strongly that the date must have been 1912.



A BALANCED LOOK AT WESTERN ELECTRIC

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(Author's clarification from Part 1: It was stated that William Orton "hired...Thomas Edison to devise a rival telephonic device." This is incorrect; it's important to note that Edison did NOT develop his lampblack transmitter directly for William Orton but only assigned the patent to Western Union. Thanks to Oliver Berliner for pointing out the error.)

=part 2=

In order to better understand the events and discoveries which led to electrical disk recording and the Orthophonic Victrola, it would be wise to review the place where they arose. As related in the first part, Western Electric began in Cleveland but moved to booming Chicago, queen of the Midwest, later in 1869. It was Barton, a native of New York State, who first broached the idea of an office back east.

By 1870 a tiny office in New York City was rented. When Bell interests acquired the company in 1881, they transferred several operations to New York, but kept the Chicago plant with its original testing and experimental department put in place by Prof. Gray in 1872. (Although Edison is often credited for heading the first industrial research facility at Menlo Park by 1876, a good case could be made that he had been preceded in this by Gray at Western Electric. Both facilities owed their start to the backing of Western Union and the urgings of its president, William Orton.)

With the growth of the Bell System it became obvious that a new company headquarters would be needed, so in 1896 the foundation was laid for an immense neo-classic pile at what became 463 West Street. It was originally ten stories, but later two more levels were added in the front and back. (See illustration.) When finished it rose like a

mountain above the old non-descript buildings in that section of the city. It covered an entire city block. Company offices, sales, and testing, along with a large engineering wing (by the turn of the century using a quarter million square feet of floor space) were the main occupants.

It was in this beehive of activity that the Western Electric Engineering Dept. became the first in its field. Long before research facilities were the corporate norm, Western Electric and later AT&T looked upon testing and experimentation as essential work, not just ornamentation for sales brochures. No less an authority than Dr. Michael Pupin, the renowned inventor and professor at Columbia University, wrote in the early 1920s: "Today the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the affiliated Western Electric Company employ about three thousand persons at an expenditure of some nine million dollars annually in their research and development work. The scientific research work at our universities looks very modest in comparison with operations of this kind." So superior were these facilities that in 1907 John Carty, who had been made Chief Engineer of AT&T, succeeding Hammond Hayes, moved the old Boston Bell labs to West Street that year. Shortly thereafter Charles Scribner became Chief



In 1896, the Western Electric Company bought property on West Street in New York City. Piles were driven into the sandy soil as support for the building that was to house the Engineering Department. In 1925, this Department, with a portion of the Patent Department, formed a new organization incorporated as "Bell Telephone Laboratories." In 1934, AT&T's Department of Development and Research was transferred to Bell Laboratories.

Engineer of Western Electric. These two men between them led those giant steps to the modern age taken by the Bell System. It would be utterly impossible within the scope of this article to do even partial justice to the accomplishments of Bell scientists in the fields of electronics or acoustics, so the reader must be warned that the account following must suffer from considerable compression. It should be further understood that as superior as the applied acoustic products designed by them were to the technologically retarded merchandise purveyed by the phonograph and talking machine makers, they were mere by-products of a much greater research program begun at Western Electric far earlier than has been credited in some well known "histories" of the talking machine industry.

John Joseph Carty, whose impatience and zeal led to the first practical public address system, among a dozen other major advances, was born in 1861 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His father had left Ireland as a boy in 1825 and grew up to be a gunsmith and mechanic of considerable ability. Among his friends were Elias Howe of sewing machine fame and Moses Farmer, the electrical inventor. It was Farmer who encouraged the electrical and magnetic interests of young John Joseph. Carty attended Cambridge Latin school where he proved to be a good but erratic student. Carty joined Boston Bell at age 18 as a junior operator at the vast sum of five dollars a week! He eventually rose to be the foremost communications expert in the country, decorated by universities beyond count. When he moved the old Court Street and Milk Street labs of Boston Bell to New York in 1907, he became a very real inspiration to the efforts of "the boys," as he had affectionately dubbed the men under him. As early as 1890 Carty had already hired sixty college graduates to work up in Boston, the largest number assembled for research purposes at that time. Joined with those at Western Electric, the combined team proved unbeatable.

Charles Ezra Scribner, Carty's counterpart at Western, was born at Mount Vernon, Ohio in 1858. He was the son of Charles H. and his wife Mary Elizabeth and attended school there. Mount Vernon, though not a large city, was a county capital and had a small industrial section, some of it electrical in nature. Scribner, like Carty, had only a high school education, but made the most of it, adding to his storehouse of knowledge by avid reading of Scientific American and various electrical texts. Though he, again like Carty, became the leader of a vast organization of top graduates from America's leading universities, Scribner was more in the mold of an empirical inventor like Edison. Theory was never enough for him. Although Scribner's father was a circuit judge in Toledo, young Scribner found much more to



Charles E. Scribner



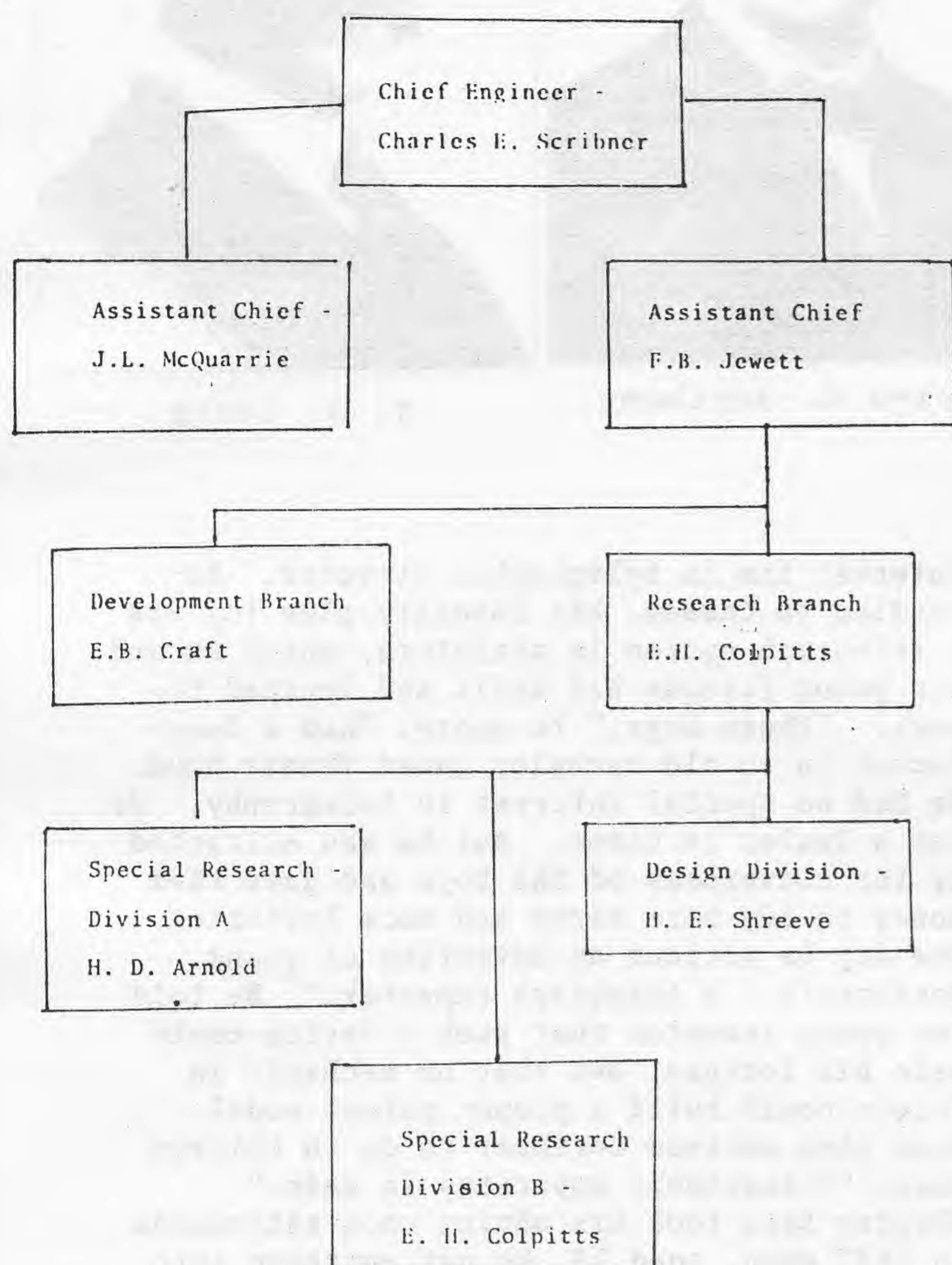
J. J. Carty

interest him in telegraphic circuits. According to Casson, his favorite play toy was a telegraph system in miniature, which he and his young friends had built and learned to work. "These boys," to quote, "had a benefactor in an old bachelor named Thomas Bond. He had no special interest in telegraphy. He was a dealer in hides. But he was attracted by the cleverness of the boys and gave them money to buy more wires and more batteries. One day he noticed an invention of young Scribner's - a telegraph repeater." He told the young inventor that such a device could make his fortune, but that no mechanic in Toledo could build a proper patent model. Bond then advised Scribner to go to Chicago where "telegraphic apparatus is made." Charles Ezra took his advice soon afterwards in 1877 when, aged 19, he got entrance into the Western Electric plant. There he accidentally met none other than Enos Barton himself who, amused at his artless tales and impressed with his inventiveness, offered him a job on the spot. Scribner rewarded such faith by becoming the most prolific inventor in the long history of Western Electric, being awarded over 490 patents! Under this engineer's engineer worked those men directly responsible for the birth of the Orthophonic Victrola and other wonders.

An organization diagram, taken from an official company chart made in 1915 but greatly simplified, will show the staff structure clearly. It must be recalled that the actual engineering group was MUCH larger than the small extract presented here. At no time in its corporate history were the bulk of the engineering budget, research budget or development design allocation devoted to so-called devices for amusement. The practical demands of a national communications system always took precedence. Yet within the con-

lines of West Street were envisioned and brought to fruition a range of improved devices of this nature which for revolutionary impact have scarce been exceeded to this day!

WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY
ENGINEERING DEPT.



The engineering operation was split into two main sections, both chiefly concerned with all aspects of telephonic improvements. The larger part, under Assistant Chief McQuarrie, was exclusively so slanted and thus need not detain us. The other, slightly smaller portion, under Assistant Chief Engineer F. B. Jewett is where any search for the antecedents of electrical recording and related arts must begin. Frank Baldwin Jewett, who was to scientific research in the 20th Century what Edison had been in the 19th, was born in Pasadena, California in 1879. A small, somewhat introverted child, he took to matters investigative at a young age. Jewett graduated from Throop Polytechnic, later to become California Tech, in 1898. He gained his doctorate in physics from the University of Chicago, studying under the renowned Robert Andrews Millikan, the pre-eminent Ameri-

can physicist until the arrival of Albert Einstein. Dr. Millikan will prove most crucial to the story of Western Electric later on. Jewett worked as an instructor under another professor, Michelson, until he was called to Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1902. After teaching there for two years he was offered a job as a transmission engineer at AT&T at a substantial salary increase. He remained in that capacity, working closely with John Carty, until Scribner called him as Assistant Chief at Western in 1912. Jewett spent most of his active career at AT&T, fathering a countless number of inventions that revolutionized American industry and society. It would take an article of this size just to list his accomplishments, never mind giving them full justice. After the retirement of Charles E. Scribner as Chief in 1916, Jewett took the helm, steadily advancing research at Western Electric and throughout the Bell System. He was made a vice-president at Western in 1922 and had the honor of becoming the first president of the incorporated Bell Telephone Labs in 1925.

Under Frank Jewett were two branches which most affected the birth and refinement of electrical recording, sound motion pictures, the public address, radio telephony and other major inventions. One, the Development Branch, though much concerned with telephonic improvements, was headed by a most far sighted scientist who would become one of the greatest champions of the new technology.

Edward Beech Craft, a descendant of an old New England family, was born in Cortland, Ohio in 1881. He attended high school in Warren, Ohio and took additional technical courses while working at the old Warren Electric and Specialty Company soon afterwards. Four years later, tiring of supervising their lamp department, he applied for a design job at Western Electric in Chicago and was hired. He steadily rose in the company. After five years at the Chicago plant he was transferred to New York and was made a development engineer. Late in 1907 he was chosen by Scribner to head the large development branch there, though only 26 years old. He served in this capacity so well that on the retirement of Scribner in 1916, Craft replaced Jewett as Assistant Chief when Jewett succeeded Mr. Scribner. In 1922, when Jewett was made engineering vice-president (in response to the huge and still growing size of the Western engineering group), Craft became engineering chief, not quite 41 years old. Craft, in contrast to some of the older engineering heads, was not exclusively fixed on just telephonic matters, but keenly interested in the growth and development of the new vacuum tube-based technology. His role in its furtherance at Western has oddly been ignored in most books.

The other crucial area to our investiga-

tion lies in the all important Research Branch. This was entirely a separate section from the main product research department and was the brainchild of both Dr. Jewett and Carty. In this small but vital group of the vast Western Electric Engineering Department was born those miraculous devices which literally changed the course of our technological civilization. First organized in 1911, it was an outgrowth of an older research section that could trace its roots back to the time of Prof. Gray. Put in charge of this all important endeavor was an AT&T veteran who had been first hired for the old Boston laboratory by Carty in 1899. Edwin Henry Colpitts, one of the outstanding inventors in a company universally known for them, was a Canadian, born in Point de Bute, New Brunswick in 1872. A Mt. Allison University graduate, class of 1893, Colpitts came to the U.S. in 1895 to attend Harvard University. He eventually got his masters degree there in 1897. He taught physics there as an assistant till hired by Carty. Colpitts spent nearly eight years at the old Boston works, often traveling between Court and Milk Streets. Though hired by Carty, he also worked with Hammond Hayes, who saw a great future for him. When Hayes retired in 1907, Carty was made AT&T Chief, thus enabling him to move the Boston Bell operation to the far better facilities of Western Electric. Colpitts, upon arriving in New York, was given over to the Western team as a development engineer. When Dr. Jewett asked him to take charge of the new Research Branch it was a dream come true for Colpitts. Few have ever bested him for persistence in solving technical problems or for seeing inherent possibilities in unproven devices. Colpitts achieved a type of lasting fame by coming up with one of the basic oscillator circuits (his co-worker Hartley came up with the other) still given in electronics textbooks to this day. Colpitts' work will figure prominently in the development of public address, electrical recordings and radio at Western.

While Colpitts not only headed the Research Branch he also was the head of his own special research group, Division B. As head of the corresponding Division A, he had a most remarkable employee. This man was none other than H. D. Arnold, father of the modern vacuum tube.

Harold DeForest Arnold was born in Woodstock, Connecticut in the late summer of 1883 to Calvin and Audra Elizabeth Arnold. As his parents were devout Methodists, it was no surprise that young Harold attended Wesleyan University, where he excelled in physics. He got his masters there in 1907 but accepted a fellowship at the University of Chicago, studying under the nationally known department head, Dr. Millikan. It was Millikan who recommended Arnold to Dr. Jewett in late 1910. By January of the following year Arnold was

safely within the walls of 463 West Street, about to embark on one of the most stellar careers in Bell System history. Like the case with Jewett, it would be impossible to even list his accomplishments in an article of this condensed nature. When industrial research was still not the mature science of today, Arnold almost single-handedly pushed it into undreamt realms. When the Western Electric Engineering Dept. was incorporated as the Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1925, Arnold was inevitably named Director of Research, a post held until his untimely death in 1933. It was directly due to the efforts of Colpitts and Arnold that the wonders of the vacuum tube were first exploited.

One person must be added to the organization whose name does not appear on the 1915 chart. It was a new practice of the Western Electric engineering operation to appoint an individual just to read and evaluate scientific journals, reports and bulletins for staff or section use. In most other manufacturing laboratories of that time (prior to the First World War) it was the general practice for the manager of the establishment to go through all relevant journals and publications looking for ideas or practices that could be of use on their work. As the number of journals printed grew, just the listing of the titles of articles for future review became a time eating task. Not only were there dozens of possible use articles in the monthly issues from "The American Physical Society," "The American Chemical Society," "The American Institute of Electrical Engineers," and so forth, but each leading university printed its own journals on physics, mathematics, and other scientific topics. This does not even include the hundreds of Bell System in-house technical papers produced each year. In 1917, when war work had demanded most of the top ranks of Western and the Bell System to serve as commissioned officers in the Signal Corps, there was literally almost no one to handle this crucial task. It could not be assigned to the clerical staff because they lacked the background to judge which materials were suitable. Into the breach stepped K. K. Darrow, the first full time researching co-ordinator.

Karl Kelchner Darrow had been born in Chicago in 1891, making him one of the youngest staff members. He studied at Paris and Berlin during 1911-12 but got his doctorate in physics from the University of Chicago in 1917. Like Jewett, Arnold and others he was a pupil of Prof. Millikan. (The role played by both Chicago and M.I.T. in furnishing star graduates to Western Electric could be the subject of its own paper.) Darrow's assignment at Western, soon after being hired in 1917, was to study and correlate the flood of scientific information and to keep the key staff researchers abreast of work done by their colleagues in the academic world. It

was Darrow who read the important paper by Prof. A. G. Webster of Clark University on exponential horns (published in 1919) which was passed on to Joseph P. Maxfield, who had not long before been promoted to branch head, and his assistant, Henry C. Harrison. It should be noted that by the time this report was in hand, Maxfield had already been promoted and had set up his team with their assignments. The Webster paper proved of great value to this team but by no means was the catalyst for their particular work.

From Tinfoil to Stereo tried to assert that the Webster paper was the start of what became the Orthophonic Victrola, but this is not the case!

(to be continued)



IN REVIEW

(Reviews by the Graphic editor, unless identified otherwise.)

Edison Blue Amberol Recordings 1912-1914 - Companion Edition, by Ronald Dethlefsen.

Collectors who have purchased either the first edition or the 1997 revised edition of Mr. Dethlefsen's work on the early years of the Blue Amberol will be glad to know that a companion volume of additional material is now available.

As new information and more materials come to light, Dethlefsen wants to get them into the hands of collectors; hence, a supplement to the main volume. Here are some of the goodies contained in the little book's fifty-two pages: nearly 50 new annotated Blue Amberol record slips; an updated listing of operatic titles in the Italian series; additional information and a rare supplement of 2-Minute Mexican Blue Amberols from 1913; new photos, including one of a studio cylinder cutting head; British Blue Amberol supplements; a few new Diamond Disc liner notes; etc. To me, the most fascinating section deals with experimental 8-minute recording of 1909-1910.

Aside from providing new information and materials devoted mainly to the Blue Amberol record, the new book serves two additional purposes. It is, of course, a valuable addendum to the original volume (the 1997 revision contains well over 200 pages). As such, it makes the first book that much more complete.

But it also offers the new or marginal

Blue Amberol collector a relatively inexpensive introduction to the subject. It gives a broad overview of the first few years of production without going into greater depth (or expenditure). One could think of it as a "Whitman's Sampler" of Blue Amberol data!

I do see one problem with the new book, though it may not turn out to be one of much significance: both the original volume and the new "Companion" bear identical covers. The prices differentiate the two now, as well as their bindings--the original is bound, while the companion has a plastic comb binding. But what about the future? If the companion is advertised for sale as an out-of-print collector's item, couldn't it easily be mistaken for the larger parent work?

Edison Blue Amberol Recordings 1912-1914 Companion Edition is a limited edition, with a production run of only 600 signed and numbered copies. For ordering information, see Ron Dethlefsen's ad on the back page of this section.

The American Opera Singer, by Peter G. Davis.

A new and rather overdue book on American opera singers and concert artists is now available. The book discusses the history of select American singers from 1825 to the present. As an added bonus, there is also a 2-CD set issued by RCA as a companion to the text.

Davis has some wit and charm in his writing as well as a gossip edge which no doubt makes for interesting reading to a beginning student or a beginning record collector. There are 25 chapters with titles including: *Adventures in the New World*; *Lindomania*; *Career Goals*; *An American Prima Donna*; *The Three Emmas*; *Go On, Minnie*; *Men at Work*; *Queen Adelina*; *She Did Her Damndest*; *Last Night There was Skating on the Nile*; *Anna Olivia (Olive Fremstad)*; *Around and About l'Ecole Marchesi*; *Sing Low*; *The Divine Mary*; *The Great Caruso*; *Gerryflappers*; *A Caruso in Petticoats*; *Going on Record*; *The Glory Road*; *Black Gold*; *Glamour Time*; *The Yellow Brewery*; *Johnson Babies I*; *If I Could Tell You*; *Johnson Babies II*; *Job Hunting*; *La Divina*; *Homemade Goods*; *At the Top*; and *The End of the Adventure*.

It is obvious that Davis is not a record collector; however, to prepare a reference book, it is not always needed. Nevertheless, a record collector/historian should have been called in to proofread the information before this book went to press. There are numerous mistakes which weaken the credibility of the author. In the chapter entitled "Around and About l'Ecole Marchesi," Davis briefly talks about Robert Blass (1867-1930) and mentions the fact that Blass recorded a "few rare Victor and Edison discs made in the 1900's." Well, this is partially correct. Blass did

record eight recordings in 1903 for the Victor Talking Machine Company. These were some of the first Victor Red Seal Records to be issued here in the United States. In 1907, Blass recorded two published two-minute Grand Opera cylinders for the Edison company. He never made published Edison Diamond Discs.

In the chapter entitled "Going on Record," Davis talks about the American lyric soprano Lucy Isabelle Marsh (1878-1956). In his short narrative, Davis states that Miss Marsh had "a brief flirtation with opera at the Met: nine performances as a Parsifal Flower-maiden during the 1904-1905 season." According to William H. Seltsam, in Metropolitan Opera Annuals (H. W. Wilson Company, 1947), Miss Marsh never sang in either opera or concert at the Metropolitan Opera House. In fact, the only name of Marsh listed is of one Helena Marsh (1918-1920).

In "Black Gold," Davis mentions that the late Roland Hayes, tenor, was in "his vocal prime during the 1920's, but unfortunately we have virtually no recorded evidence--he made a few discs for a small label, but they disappointed him and he personally destroyed them by cutting the matrices in two with a pair of shears." This certainly sounds like a melodramatic moment from an Italian verismo opera; however, as dramatic as it sounds, it is simply not true. Hayes signed a recording contract with the English branch of the Vocalion label in 1922. He recorded four titles including "Bye an' Bye," and "Steal Away." According to Hayes in his autobiography Angel Mo' and Her Son, Roland Hayes (1942), he stopped recording for the company because Vocalion would not pay him enough money.

Certain artists such as David Bispham and Alice Nielsen are mentioned as having made recordings with select titles listed; other artists are discussed in some length, including Mary Garden and Kathryn Meisle, and nothing is mentioned about their recording careers. There is no excuse for such poor continuity in research methodology. By the way, Meisle, a minor artist indeed, recorded two titles for Victor in 1924 and a few ditties for Brunswick in 1928.

Of course, Davis felt it was necessary to spend a chapter on Enrico Caruso. Why? It has been said better in other books and by the tenor's son. This also presents a problem. Caruso was an Italian and never became a naturalized citizen. Davis expounds that his book is about American or naturalized citizens of the United States; again, continuity is totally lacking in this regard.

Davis gives John McCormack one sentence, and that sentence is a discussion about recording operatic duets with Lucy Isabelle Marsh. This is unacceptable for a so-called writer to not mention one of the greatest concert tenors here in the United States from 1912 until 1929. McCormack became a naturalized citizen during World War I.

Richard Crooks is given a few condescending paragraphs. Other artists such as Arthur Middleton, bass-baritone, who did have a career at the Metropolitan Opera House and in concerts and oratorio, as well as famous concert and recording baritone Reinald Werrenrath, are simply not listed or mentioned.

All in all, there are numerous mistakes and problems with this book. The subject matter alone really deserves something definitive and not this weak, feeble attempt at research. Needless to say, this book is not recommended unless one feels that something is better than nothing at all.

The American Opera Singer is published by Doubleday; it has 626 pages, 35 photographs, and a price of \$40.00.

(reviewed by Dennis E. Ferrara)

Brass Band Cylinder and Non-Microgroove Disc Recordings, 1903-1960, by Frank Andrews.

What an amazing coincidence that Frank Andrews should receive the 1997 Lifetime Achievement Award Certificate from The Association for Recorded Sound Collections in May at the Association's Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee for his thirty years plus of research and writing on British sound recordings from the 1890's to the 1940's, and following with this astounding book.

Recognizing that the Brass Band Movement has long been a way of life for the masses in Britain, particularly for the 'working-class' people, what can this book do for the reader? First, knowing the range of performers and the scope of their recordings brings scattered information organized for quick reference to one's attention. The St. Hilda Colliery Band, one of the best known, produced a span of music from marches, popular tunes, religious selections and novelties to 'test' pieces and orchestral arrangements. No less than thirteen labels featured the Band from 1912 to 1925. In 1926 the Band turned professional. Their repertoire continued to expand, with the electrical era at hand, under additional pseudonymous band names. St. Hilda's Band disbanded in 1937.

Second, observing the recording dates places the performers in a previously unknown time-slot. One of the great cornet soloists, Jack Mackintosh, performed his solos and duets from 9 September 1928 to February 1934. Rather surprising! On the other hand Harry Mortimer's commercial solo-recording career extended from September 1922 to 11 August 1948.

Third, having had access to recordings of massed brass bands, frequently from the early 1930's, I have often wondered if these observances were successful in the eyes of the record-buying public. The National Brass Band Festivals at Crystal Palace were recorded from 1932 to 1940, and the Leicester Brass Band Festivals, held at De Montfort Hall,

Leicester, covered the same years.

Fourth, the progress of history can be graphically noted with the flow and ebb of activity at the sound studios. Recording activities were virtually shut down during both World Wars. In 1950 it appears that half the bands gained support from record companies like ISIS and JAMCO. "The Grimes Series" and their sounds were captured at the Llanduro Music Festival, Usher Hall in Edinburgh, the Royal Albert Hall in London and Belle Vue in Manchester, to name only a few. No indication is given as to why the deluge. Many of these may not have had a large circulation, as "FURTHER DETAILS REQUIRED" follows a significant number of entries. And what private or public collection could afford and keep up with this new supply of discs? And if the BBC and other institutions don't have them, they must be widely scattered in the homes of those that were geographically near the various performance locations.

Fifth, the title, composer and performer information is identical to information gleaned from record labels and issuing company catalogues and has been meticulously transferred. This exacting work is a great boon to all who want to count the data as the 'final' word.

Where recordings are issued outside the U.K., data indicate such. The 'Presentation of Information' states:

- NAME OF BAND (bold)
- Conductor NAME SHOWN IN BOLD
- Details of record type with record labels in CAPITAL LETTERS
- Details of recording place, day-month-year
- Issue date mo/yr; Number; Matrix

The pages of 'Record Labels and Their Properties' is especially useful. Frank Andrews has unearthed a great deal of information about the history of British record companies and is the leading authority in the field. He has generously shared information with members of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society through his articles in their 'Hillandale News' and his many personal appearances giving informative talks featuring recordings.

The basis for much of my enthusiasm for the Brass Band discography is in the listening to nearly a hundred of these band and soloist recordings. The clearness, the conciseness, especially of the electrical recordings, is exhilarating. If you get over to England soon I urge you to look for these 78's of this long neglected field. I understand that there are still quite a few to be found in flea markets and record dealers' shops.

This is a must for all who play, or don't play, brass instruments. There are many revelations for the reader or peruser. Will the next edition have an alphabetical index

to locate bands and soloists quickly? My knowledge has been greatly increased. Hurrah for Frank Andrews.

Brass Band Cylinder and Non-Microgroove Disc Recordings 1903-1960 is a systematic catalogue of all British brass bands with an alphabetical/chronological discography of individual brass bands, soloists, massed brass bands, Salvation Army bands and soloists, with a listing of record labels and their proprietors. There is a foreword by Dr. Trevor Herbert. It is available from Piccolo Press, P.O. Box 50613, Columbia. SC 29250 at \$20.00 postpaid; Overseas orders may be ordered at £11.75 postpaid from Piccolo Press, 10 Clifton Terrace, Winchester, England, SO22 5BJ.

(Reviewed by Frederick Williams)

Rosa Ponselle: American Diva, by Mary Jane Phillips-Matz.

After all is said and done, there are now five books available on the life and times of one of the greatest voices of this century, Rosa Ponselle (1897-1981). In reading the earlier four books and now this new one, one question arises "Why another book?" This is a good question, and the answer is simple: There is very little which has not already been said in other books and articles.

Granted, there is more information about Carmela Ponselle, including the rather interesting funeral arrangements for the Ponselle sisters. However, basically this new book is again the retelling of twice told tales about Rosa Ponselle and her career. The author spends a chapter on the Ponzillo family in Italy as well as here in the United States. It has been told earlier.

Yes, there is a chapter on Caruso and his family in Italy. Again, this is repetitious. Readers are encouraged to read Enrico Caruso: My Father and My Family by Enrico Caruso, Jr. and Andrew Farkas (Amadeus Press, 1990, ISBN 0-931340-24-1) for a more complete history regarding the famous tenor and his family.

The new book, however, covers and discusses Ponselle's financial career, including her earnings from the Columbia Graphophone and Victor Talking Machine Companies. It seems that Ponselle had some choice regarding the selection of arias and songs to be recorded by Victor. It is a shame that she did not record more for that company.

The 26 photographs have already been reproduced elsewhere throughout the years in other articles, magazines, or books on operatic singers of the past. There is another discography as well; yet, this one does not offer anything new or unique. How about the actual recording contracts from Columbia or Victor?

Ms. Phillips-Matz needed to do some extra research on Enrico Caruso's recording career. She states that Caruso's first recordings for

the Victor Talking Machine Company were recorded at Camden, New Jersey, in February 1904. This is not correct. His first Victor recordings were made on February 1, 1904 in New York City, Carnegie Hall studio.

Overall, this book adds very little to Rosa Ponselle. If one collects to have the complete five books on the soprano, then, this book will give the collector the complete set of five books.

Rosa Ponselle: American Diva (ISBN 1-55553-317-5) has 357 pages and 26 photographs. It is published by Northeastern Press at \$29.95.

(reviewed by Dennis E. Ferrara)

Silver Threads, by Arthur Bradley.

This is a charming collection of fifteen articles which first appeared in Joslin's Jazz Journal. Bradley is an expert in the field of jazz, an engaging and entertaining writer, and an astute observer of changing musical trends over the years.

The chapters (individual essays) range the gamut from looks at musical tastes to record companies to song writers to publishers, and beyond. Some will be of acute interest to Graphic readers, while others will be less so. I was particularly fascinated to read the chapter on Irving Mills. What a go-getter this fellow was! Mills was a song-plugger, a publisher, a record producer, an agent/promoter (his clients included Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Jimmy Lunceford... not too shabby!). I was surprised to learn that Mills actually paid for the recording sessions of his "Hotsy Totsy Gang," among others. No wonder his groups featured so many songs for which his publishing company owned the copyrights!

Another chapter discusses and analyzes the artists and repertoire of the Decca blue label which, to Bradley's examination, had its own unique identity for several years.

The chapter "Sixty Years of Star Dust" studies the variety of styles and recordings of that perennial chestnut. An appendix lists over a thousand recordings made of "Star Dust" between 1927 and 1990!

While the book covers several decades, its strength lies in covering the popular music of the thirties through post World War II. It has 374 pages (hardbound), and there are some great photos and a detailed index.

Silver Threads is entertaining reading, often with tongue-in-cheek humor. It is now out of print and can only be obtained from the author: Arthur Bradley, 146 Beech Street, Floral Park, N.Y. 11001. See his display ad elsewhere in this section.

HERE & THERE

Compiled for the GRAPHIC by
Marjorie Gleyre Lachmund

This issue is lacking a bit in the phonograph department, but we promise to make amends in the next issue. Also in the next issue, an impressive and unique listing of records from Ray Wile's research. Blue Amberol fans won't want to miss this one!

No article in recent issues has resulted in more reader comments than the comparison of touched-up Edison photos from N.A.G. #98. There have been several theories as to why these were done, but no concrete evidence. An interesting comment came from Louis Harrison, who wrote: "Your article on the doctored Edison photos appeared soon after the publication of The Commissar Vanishes in which photo historian David King examines the doctored photographs of the Stalin-era Soviet Union. Of course...the alteration of changing a cylinder in Edison's hands into a Diamond Disc can't compare to a photo touch-up that erases a liquidated party official!"

In our last issue we mentioned Frank Andrews' project documenting the British Silver-tone label, which is totally unrelated to the U.S. Sears' label of the same name. An illustration of this label appears on page 7 of this issue. Readers owning any of these discs are urged to contact Frank at: 46 Aboyne Rd., Neasden, England NW10 OHA.

Another discography in the works is Stan Hester's Brunswick "Mood Accompaniment Library" recordings. These discs were produced in both 10" and 12" sizes containing both unique and reissued masters from domestic and foreign sources. A curious feature is that the entire series of about 500 was issued in alphabetical order in catalogue number sequence. The records have cream-colored labels and have the same selection on either side. Please help Stan with his research if you have access to any of these records: 719 Panorama Dr., Milford, MI 48381.

Our 1998 Contest

We were reminded recently by contributor George Paul that 1998 marks the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the Edison Standard -- that indomitable little cylinder phonograph which brought music to hundreds of thousands of North American homes, especially in rural areas.

The "Standard" was so successful a seller that they still turn up at farm auctions, antique shops, barn sales, etc. It remained in production for about fifteen years and went

through several model designations. It was so rugged and practical that 1898 models could easily be upgraded to play Blue Amberol Records with the same quality as 1913 models.

We invite readers to help us document the oldest and the newest Edison Standards held in private and public collections. This is easily determined by transcribing the serial numbers on Standards they are acquainted with.

Whether it's your Standard, a friend's, or a museum's, please send us the serial number if you believe it qualifies as the lowest or highest out there. (The oldest models should have two clips to hold the lid; the latest should bear the model designation "G.")

Submissions must be received by August 15th, 1998. Prizes will be awarded for the oldest and newest Standards reported. (If the same machine is reported more than once, the earliest submission is the winner.)

OBITUARIES

New York Times, January 8, 1998

Mae Questel, 89, Behind Betty Boop and Olive Oyl

By RICK LYMAN



Culver Pictures, 1934

Mae Questel

Mae Questel, a rubber-voiced veteran of stage, screen and vaudeville who played Woody Allen's mother in "New York Stories" and was the cartoon voice of Betty Boop and Olive Oyl, died on Sunday at her home in Manhattan. She was 89.

Ms. Questel was 17 and living in the South Bronx when she won a local contest to find the girl who most resembled Helen Kane, a popular singer known as the boop-oop-a-doop queen. Ms. Questel was signed by an agent that night and soon was performing on the vaudeville circuit, including numerous stints at the Palace Theater.

She appeared in acts alongside many other performers and also as a "single," using her flexible vocal

cords to sing and do imitations of Maurice Chevalier, Fanny Brice, Rudy Vallee and Marlene Dietrich.

When the animator Max Fleischer heard Ms. Questel doing her boop-oop-a-doop routine in 1931, he signed her to take over the cartoon voice of Betty Boop in more than 150 animated shorts, until Fleischer retired the character in 1939. Her recording of "On the Good Ship Lollipop," in Betty Boop's voice, sold more than two million copies in the 1930's.

In 1933, she created the voices of Olive Oyl and Sweet Pea for the "Popeye" cartoons, and played Popeye's scrawny paramour in more than 450 cartoons until they went out of production in 1967. She once told an interviewer that her Olive Oyl voice was an attempt to imitate the

actress ZaSu Pitts. At various times, she also provided the voices for Little Audrey, Casper the Friendly Ghost and other cartoon characters.

Among her many Broadway credits were "Dr. Social" in 1948, "A Majority of One" in 1959 and "Enter Laughing" in 1963. She also appeared in the film version of "A Majority of One" in 1962, "Funny Girl" in 1968 and "New York Stories" in 1989. On the soundtrack of Mr. Allen's "Zelig" (1983) she sang the Betty Boop theme song, "Chameleon Days."

She is survived by a son, Richard Balkin of upstate New York, and three granddaughters.

In 1963 Ms. Questel was asked to give her philosophy for survival. "Don't make a megillah out of every little thing," she said.



EXAMINER/1935

Edna Fischer played on the first Bay Area radio broadcast.

'First lady of radio' Edna Fischer

By Philip Elwood
EXAMINER MUSIC CRITIC

Pianist Edna Fischer, 95, The City's beloved "First Lady of Radio," died peacefully Sunday at her San Francisco home.

Ms. Fischer was born in San Jose, then moved with her family to north Berkeley shortly before the 1906 earthquake.

"I was considered a child prodigy," she told The Examiner in a 1983 interview, "I was playing piano before I went to kindergarten." By the time she was in her teens, Ms. Fischer was playing in dance studios, working weekends in fox-trot bands.

In 1918, at age 16, Ms. Fischer played piano on what historians consider the first Bay Area radio broadcast.

"The piano and equipment were in a basement room at the Claremont Hotel; the signal was broadcast from the hotel's tower," she recalled. "It was an experimental station, I think it became KRE later on."

Ms. Fischer was a good dancer, and after World War I (and Berkeley High) she went into vaudeville as a dancer and pianist, spending her time at home in the Bay Area working for music publishers. In 1922 she joined Rosetta and Vivian Duncan (the Duncan Sisters) in their immensely popular "Topsy and Eva" show. Ms. Fischer recorded with the Duncans and as a soloist for the Victor label.

A 1926 auto wreck fractured her right wrist; she dropped out of the Duncan Sisters' show and vaudeville, returned to San Francisco and became staff pianist on KFRC at their Van Ness Avenue studios. "I loved radio work," she said, "It was show-business without much glamour, but I played all kinds of

piano styles, worked with great entertainers and became a well known figure in the San Francisco music world."

She was married to Milton Hayes, an Oceanic Lines purser, in 1929. A few years later, he left the liners to become the general manager of the Press Club. He died in 1981.

During the 1930s and into the TV era, Ms. Fischer played (and wrote) constantly as a staff musician for radio stations in San Francisco and Los Angeles. She played with Meredith Willson's NBC orchestra, wrote band leader Anson Weeks' theme song, "Someday Soon," and composed background music for Carlton E. Morse's famed network show "One Man's Family."

Fischer also played and broadcast frequently at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in 1939-40; by the 1950s she was musical director at KPIX-TV.

Encouraged by such pop-music archivists and performers as pianist Peter Mintun and David Fowler, Ms. Fischer came out of semi-retirement in the 1980s to perform again in the Bay Area and host a weekly radio show ("Edna Fischer's Melody Time") on KALW-FM. She would play a little, chat with radio old timers, play their recordings, and project her wit and winning personality over the airwaves.

She joined the American Federation of Musicians in 1928 and was an ASCAP member and a lifetime member of the Bay Area's Broadcast Legends organization.

She is survived by a nephew, John R. Meers. At her request there will be no funeral services. A memorial musical celebration is being planned.

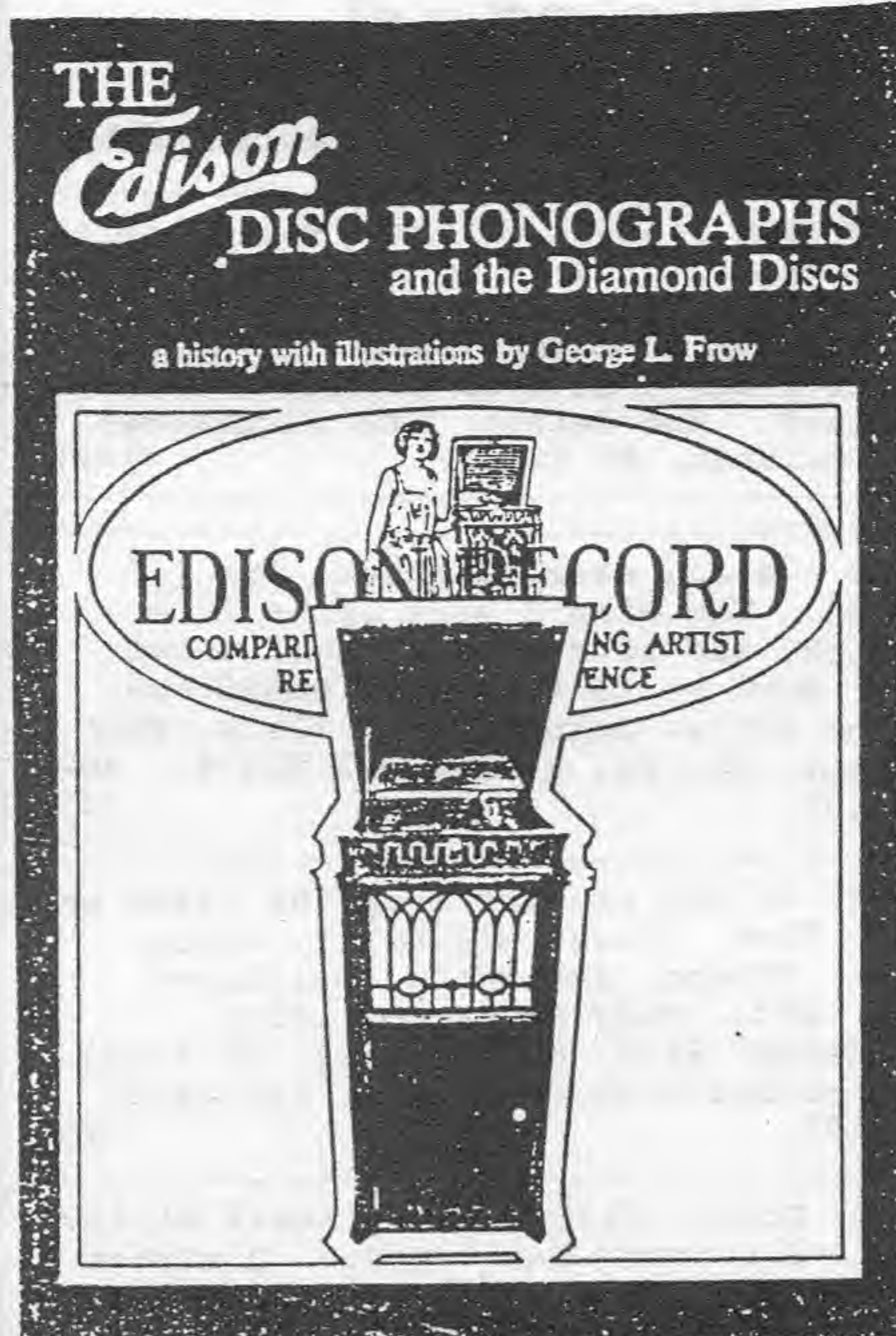


Above: Edna Fischer's first recording with the Duncan Sisters was made on November 13, 1923.

Three Great Books Now In Stock!

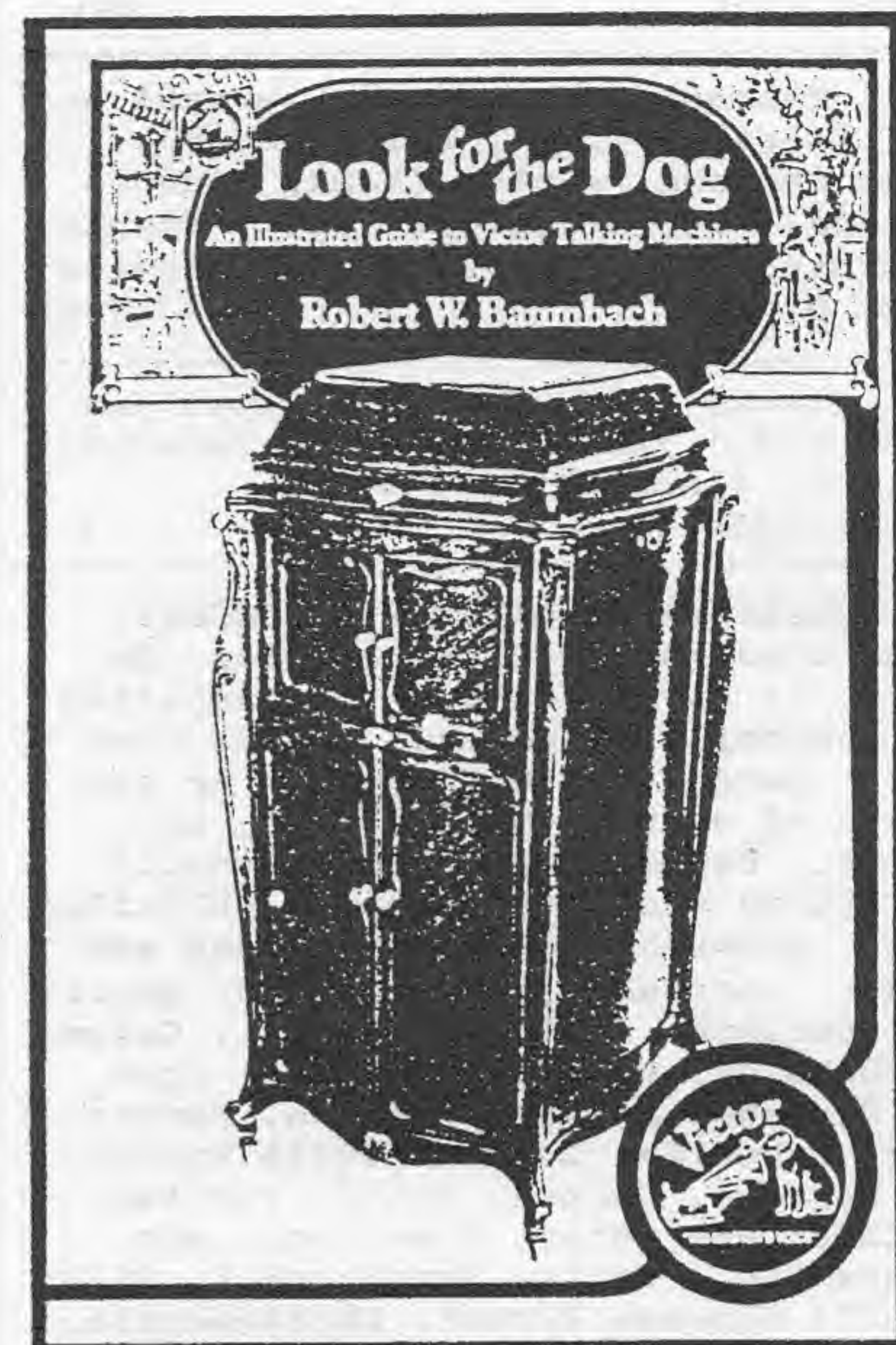
25.

COLUMBIA PHONO. COMPANION (Vol. II)
The authoritative guide to disc Graphophones & Grafonolas with illustrations of each Columbia disc product 1899-1929. Company history, production dates, original prices, etc. 270 pages, hardbound. Pub. @ \$29.95. Our Price: \$26.95 + \$1.75 postage



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Look for the Dog - An Illustrated History to Victor Talking machines. Illustrations to every Victor product 1901-1929. Production dates & quantities; company history; service & repair instructions, etc. 335 pages, soft cover. Published at \$19.95. Our Price: \$17.95 + \$1.25 postage.



Wanted
(very badly!)



Edison Blue Amberol #5641
"Polly Wolly Doodle"
by Vernon Dalhart



Needed for a very special birthday gift to someone very dear to me to remind them of a very special occasion that happened fifty years ago

-Price is no object-

The cylinder must be in mint condition (almost like new) - otherwise please do not contact me!

Bill Eigenfeld
388 - Avenue X, Apt. 2K
Brooklyn, NY 11223
718-645-9415

wanted

Wanted--Presidential campaign speeches on cylinder. Excellent original Fireside. Maroon Gem Fireside horn in original condition. Presidential campaign items dating 1960 or earlier. Todd Harris, 19-17 Parsons Blvd., Whitestone, NY 11357. (718) 746-4335. (99)

WANTED: Emerson crank-up phonographs and parts. Emerson 6", 7", & 12" records. Also any Emerson related items, such as literature, record dusters, etc. Thanks, Herb Rhyner, 123 Columbus Place, Roselle Park, NJ 07204. (98)

WANTED: Gun-metal finish gear cover for Amberola I-A. Martin Bryan, 37 Caledonia Street, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819. (902) 748-9264. ()

HELP! COLLECTOR OF MILITARY (CONCERT) BAND and wind and percussion solos, duets, etc. is in last stages of compiling Victor Company catalogues. Needs many records. Send lists with prices or ask for lists of wants. Need 7", 8", 10", 14" sizes. Particularly need "Consolidated Talking Machine," pre-dog "Eldridge Johnson", Monarch, DeLuxe types and educational. Also seek other labels: American, 7" Berliner (all performers), Columbia, Brunswick, Busy Bee, Climax, Cort, D & R, Diamond, Edison, Emerson, Federal, Gennett, Lakeside, Leeds, Little Wonder, Lyric, Marconi, Oxford, Pathé, Puritan, Rex, Silvertone, Star, Zonophone, etc. Cylinders too. Write: Frederick P. Williams, 8313 Shawnee Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118. (cc)

WANTED: Edison Diamond Discs 50203, 50509, 83063, 84001. Also, Edison Blue Amberol boxes and tops. Must be in excellent condition. Describe, price. Gregory R. Reed, 141 South Broad Street, Nazareth, PA 18064. (103)

WANTED: Edison Opera Phonograph. I prefer one in good original condition to one that is overly restored! John Buscemi, 30 Breed Street, Lynn, MA 01902. (617) 599-8643. (100)

Wanted: Edison cylinder No. 9475 "Cherry Hill Jerry" by Ada Jones & Len Spencer. I will buy or trade. Bill Kocher, Box 155, Vernon CT 06066. Tel 860-875-2520. (99)

Opera original parts wanted: Horn, gear cover over governor, automatic stop and screw, Triumph lid handle. Howard Klein, 2980 Forest Lake, Acampo, Calif. 95220. (102)

WANTED: Charles Magnante LP titled: HIS AND HERS (Accordion), COOK #1014; Charles Magnante LP titled: DANCE MUSIC (Accordion), COLONIAL #116; Walter Erikson LP titled: ACCORDION WALTZES, COLONIAL # ST LP 693; 78 RPM COLUMBIA 12069F, Russian Novelty Orch: The Swallow Waltz/Have Pity on Me. William Alberico, 1604 Washington Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90403. (99)

DICK SPOTTSWOOD likes pre-war ethnic 78s-Slavic, S. American, Irish, Cuban, West Indian, Greek, Turkish, Albanian, Bulgarian & more. Exotics preferred. To contact Dick: 10511 De Neane Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20903. (107)

WANTED: 2 minute cylinder records: "Star Spangled Banner," Edison Military Band (Edison #92) and "Stars & Stripes Forever," Edison Military Band (Edison #93). Gene Ezzell, 610 Clearview, San Antonio, TX, 78228-1706. (210) 434-7568. (100)

WANTED: CLASSICAL GUITAR 78s. Contact me if you have any for sale. Patrick Grant, 3419 Nottingham St., Houston, TX 77005. E-mail pgrant@enron.com. (101)

wanted

RUTH ETTING records wanted. Would prefer V+ or better. I am 89 so I can't wait too long, so tell me what you have and your asking price in first letter. I'll buy them if I don't have to mortgage the homestead. Bob Netzer, 1229 Ridgecrest Road, Orlando, FL 32806. (100)

WANTED - Black storage albums for 10" records. The kind I want opens like a notebook, and holds ten or twelve records. Must be in excellent condition. Call or write: John Simons, 124 S. Main St., Apt. #6, St. Albans, VT 05478. 802-524-0132. (99)

Wanted: 78 RPM records from the 1920s and '30s. Jazz, Blues, Hillbilly, Cajun, Vocals, Stomps, Jug Bands, Washboard Bands, etc. Tony Peterson, 10291 Mississippi Blvd, Coon Rapids, MN 55433. acp@ironwood.cray.com (612) 422-8889/683-5621. (99)

Wanted: Edison cylinders by "Polk Miller and His Old South Quartette." 2 minute wax: #10332, 10333, 10334 and Blue Amberols #2175, 2176, 2177 & 2178. Ken Flaherty, Jr., 7279 Turkey Creek Road, Waverly, TN 37185. (615) 296-4578. (99)

Wanted - Emerson crank-up phonographs and parts, Emerson 6", 7", & 12" records. Also any Emerson related items, such as literature, record dusters, etc. Also Victor machines with the Victor Victrola decal on lid. Thanks, Herb Rhyner, 123 Columbus Place, Roselle Park, N.J. 07204. (99)

PICTURE - DISCS - RECORDS (1900--Present) Buy/trade. Lists: 78s, LPs, 7", Shapes, Cardboards. Antonio Popp, Schillerstr. 9, 65549 - Limberg, Germany. Phone & Fax: (+49) 6431 4 17 17 (100)

WANTED! Rachmaninoff's Diamond Discs! Mozart Variations, Chopin Valse Op. 42 #82197; Scarlatti Pastorale #82170; Rachmaninoff Prelude C# #82187. ALL B TAKES ONLY! Joe Salerno, Box 1487, Bellaire TX 77402. 713/668-8650. (101)

Wanted: Victrola Tungs Tone Needles (full tone) in red and gold tins. Alan Linderman, 18415 Lancashire Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48223. (313) 835-0457. (103)

Wanted: Complete cabinet for: Amberola 50 (either wood) or Amberola 60 (either wood), Diamond Disc, London Upright. Jerry Donnell, Rt. 5, Box 1430, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425. (101)

I am doing research on the Brunswick "Mood Accompaniment Library" series. I would appreciate hearing from any collector who has any of these discs. I need to know the song title and the record L-number. If we ever publish the complete listing all credits will be given to those who have helped. Stan Hester, 719 Panorama Dr., Milford, MI 48381. (101)

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Send me your want lists of 78's, 45's, LP's. Ask for available records by artists. For \$1.25 receive "Ideas on Beginning a 78's Record Collection" - Frederick P. Williams, 8313 Shawnee Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118. ()

FOR SALE - Tapered oak reamer for your Amberol cylinders. Reams them to the original size. Fancy grip handle, accurately tapered. \$16 + \$1.50 shipping. Ron Miller, Route 1, Box 21, Bagley, MN 56621 or call (218) 694-6951. (99)

Original Columbia Numerical Catalog. Ethnic Victor-Columbia-Polydor-Telefunken-Radiofunken 78's. Capitol Ethnic LP's. Walter Mitziga, P.O. Box 49412, Chicago, Illinois 60649. (99)

Approx. 650 Red Seals for sale. Acoustic and electric, 10 and 12 inch, condition varies. \$200 for the lot. Must be picked up. Barry L. House, 167 Carroll St., Springfield, MA 01108-2781. (413-733-6489). (99)

For Sale - Sonora crank phonograph parts. TCM, Box 363, Rotterdam Jct., New York 12150-0363. (99)

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Auctions

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RECORD AUCTIONS - Cylinders and Discs (lateral & vertical cut) 1895-1955+. All sizes and categories. Free lists issued quarterly to active bidders. Arthur S. Paré, 46 Bay Road, Shelburne, VT 05482. (98)

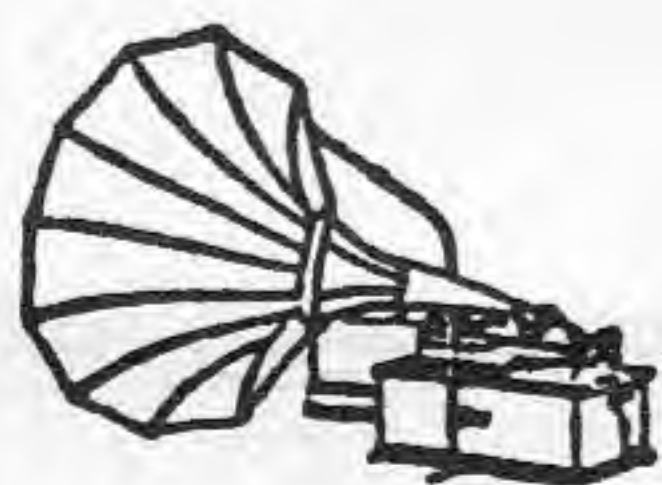
78 RPM Auctions - Greatly expanded - each issue includes thousands of popular, personality, classical, vocals, jazz, country and western, vaudeville, dance bands, ethnic, military, spoken word 1900--1940s. Free lists. Never a minimum bid. David A. Reiss, 3920 Eve Dr., Seaford, NY 11783. ()

AUCTION: First time offered collection of very old and newer 78 rpm records. Send a LSASE to get our FREE list! Also have Sonora phonograph parts for sale (Motor, Turntable, Crank, etc.). We collect Cal Stewart and other early comical artists. Have any? Jerry LeQuieu, Box 2, Malin, Oregon 97632. (99)

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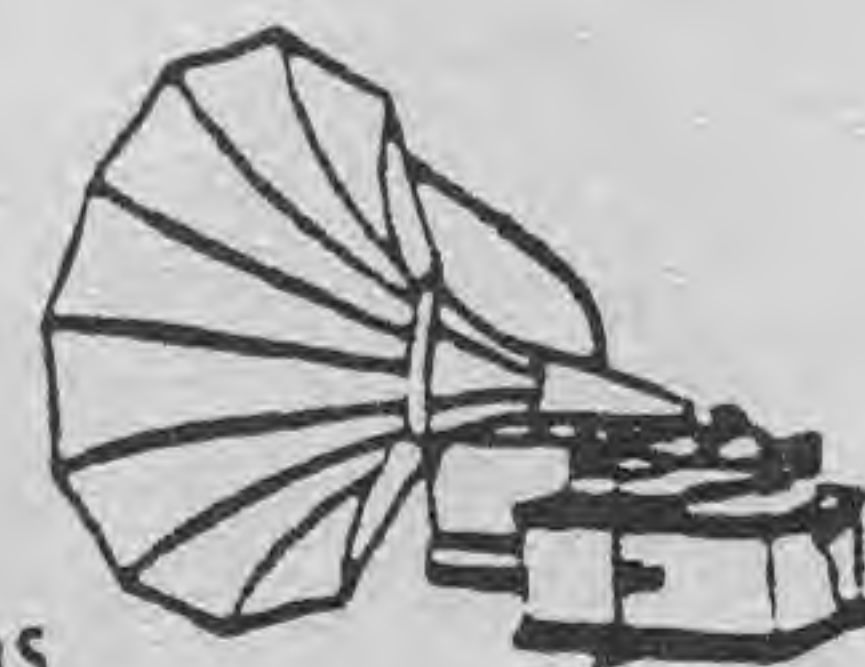
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